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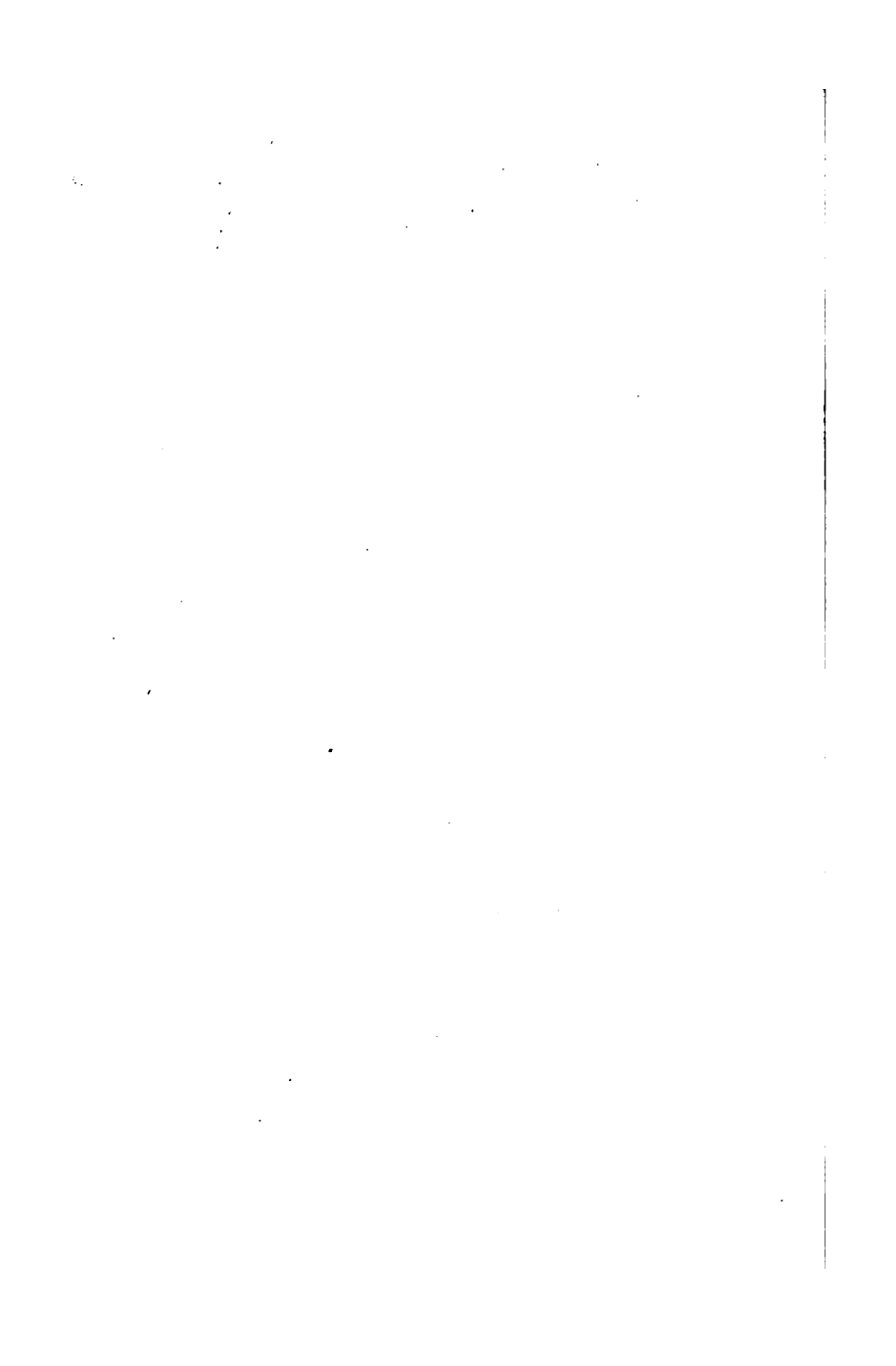
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THOUGHTS ON THE SERVICES,
OR, MEDITATIONS BEFORE
WORSHIP:

DESIGNED AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LITURGY,
AND AN AID TO ITS DEVOUT USE.

BY A. CLEVELAND COXE,
RECTOR OF GRACE CH., BALTIMORE.

ADAPTED TO THE USE OF MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

BY REV. LEOPOLD J. BERNAYS, M.A.

LATE FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.



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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

WHEN this little work was put into my hands, with a request that I would superintend its passage through the press, adapting it, where alteration was needed, to the use of members of our own Church, I was not aware of the considerable difference which existed in the Lessons selected by the two Churches, of America and England, for the various days of public Service. The existence of this difference has not only rendered the revision of the work more laborious, but has made it, to a certain extent, less complete for the use of English Churchmen than it is for those for whom it was originally designed.

The Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, however, are always the same, and as the Lessons of the American Church, when they differ from those selected by our own, are singularly appropriate to the services of the day, I have thought it better, while adding a short statement of what I supposed to be the object of the framers of our Liturgy, to retain the comments of the author on the Lessons appointed in his own Church, thus recommending those chapters for private reading on the Sundays or holidays on which they occur.

With the exception of a few notes, where they appeared desirable, and some few passages in the text, always denoted by brackets [], the work appears very much in its original form.* Although I do not profess to agree with every expression in it, there appears to me to be so much of sound sense and true piety displayed in it, that I have good hope that it will be acceptable to many an English reader.

The author has visited this country, and has recorded his "Impressions of England," and his deep interest in its Church, the mother of his own community, in an interesting work, containing some valuable opinions and suggestions.

L. J. BERNAYS.

Elstree Hill, June 7, 1859.

* Once or twice, where a word was introduced, needlessly (as it seemed to me), suggesting a controversial feeling, I have ventured to strike it out, as being superfluous in a work entirely of devotion. I am sure I shall have the Author's and the Reader's forgiveness for the very slight liberty which I have taken with the text.



P R E F A C E.

THIS book belongs to that humble sort, which only aims to be useful. It is intended to instruct and edify devout persons, who cannot study learned and critical works. The writer's earliest experiences, as a pastor, convinced him that there are many who require such a help to the full enjoyment of our worship. After delivering courses of lectures on the Services to his congregations in St. Ann's, Morrisania, and St. John's, Hartford, he published some of his "Notes" in "The Calendar" in 1845. These are now completed, and constitute this book.

While instructing candidates for Orders in Pastoral Theology, in Trinity College, he was led to believe that in addition to the ordinary textbooks on these subjects, something imbued with the *feeling* of each service, might be highly useful to our younger clergy. The lamented Dr. Croswell, of Boston, had previously urged him to supply this want by republishing the "Notes" from the "Calendar," just as they were ; adding,

that he had actually made these scraps into a little book, which he found useful even to himself. Thus encouraged, the writer ought not to have been deterred perhaps by his own feelings of dissatisfaction with what he had written : but, after long waiting for time to make it better, he now sends it forth, with very little alteration, to do what good it may, by God's blessing on its insufficiency.

The object is to beget habits of close attention to the Psalms and Lessons, and their bearing on the subjects of each particular service. The young, more especially, need to learn that the Church's arrangement of the Lessons and other portions of Scripture is a commentary of itself, and that *the Word*, thus *fitly spoken*, is indeed "like apples of gold, in pictures of silver." The following hints may be necessary to a full understanding of the plan of this book :—

I. THE LITURGY, strictly speaking, is the Communion Service, with its Collect, Epistle and Gospel. The key-note of all the appointments for any day is therefore found in this part of worship. In this Service also the Decalogue, or Moral Law, is read on every Festival, as part of the Penitential System of the Church ; and because it is written—"He that turneth away his ear from hearing *the Law*, even his prayer shall be abomination."

2. **THE DAILY PRAYER** of the Church grew out of the Synagogue worship, which consisted of Psalms and Lessons. These Psalms and Lessons, on Sundays and Holidays, were conformed to the higher solemnities of "the breaking of Bread," for which chiefly the primitive Faithful were gathered together.

3. **THE INTROITS** are the Psalms which are sung before the Communion Service begins. They are commonly sung in *metre*; but in this book the version of the Psalter is cited, as more suited to point out the inspired purpose and meaning.

4. **ANTHEMS** are sung after the third Collect, in the Church of England, by rubric; but, in the American Church, before and after the Sermons, at the discretion of the Minister. Though the places where they are constantly used are comparatively few, they are frequently spoken of in this book, to supply the mind with a thought for the day, to be used as St. Paul suggests, "singing and making melody in your hearts to the LORD."

The Clergy, by giving emphasis to the characteristic portions of the Lessons and Gospels, often preach **CHRIST** most powerfully, even when there is no Sermon. But, nothing can make up for the lack of a genuine relish in the people's hearts, for each "portion of meat in its season."

The writer has avoided a dry and technical manner of arranging his comments, believing that a more uniform method of treating the services

would become wearisome. What is lost in apparent method, he trusts, is regained in the comparative freshness of each successive page.

For use in Church, before Service begins ; for the closet of invalids, desirous of being present, in spirit, with their fellow worshippers ; for the instruction of children, and as an introduction of the Church's system to strangers, the writer commits it to his beloved brethren of the Household of Faith.

A. C. C.

BALTIMORE, 1858.



MEMORANDA.

IT is well to be early at Church, if the time before service be devoutly employed in the use of the Prayer-book or Bible.

Instead of staring about, or listlessly lolling in our seats after the usual devotions on coming in, we should read over the Psalter, or some other portion of Scripture, as suited to direct our thoughts in the House of Prayer, and as the best stimulant to enjoyment of the public Service.

If it be indeed the house of GOD, why should we throw away one minute within its sacred walls, and at the very gate of Heaven?

Let me suggest several particulars, by which you may be assisted in acquiring decent and devout habits.

1. Do not be afraid of making your devotions too long, when you first bow your head on entering.

2. If you have time, use the Collects in the Ordination Service for the Minister and the congregation, your brethren and fellow-worshippers.

3. Find the Psalms for the day; look them over; and also the Epistle and Gospel, and suit your ejaculations to the season, the festival or the subject.

4. Look over your baptismal vows; your confirmation promises; and use proper ejaculations, beseeching GOD for grace to keep them.

5. If you have God-children, now is the time to pray for them ; or for your own children ; or for both together.

6. If you have particular sins to repent of, confess them ; and use the prayers in the Communion Service, or the 51st Psalm, as preparatory to the General Confession and the Absolution in the Service.

7. If you have received peculiar mercies, thank God for them ; and use the 63rd Psalm, or some other Psalm of Thanksgiving.

8. If in peculiar afflictions, use some of the Penitential Psalms, such as the Psalms 6, 31, 32, 38, 39, 44, 51, 80, 90, or any Prayers appropriate.

9. Or make use of the Collects successively ; as reminding you of past and future Services, and as being very comprehensive.

10. Or if you choose, *commune with your own heart, and be still* ; and like the publican, “ smite upon your breast, saying—*GOD be merciful to me a sinner !* ”

Oh, when all this might be done how can Christians spend holy time in the holy place, in staring at their neighbours, or in even more trifling ways ! Would not ministers be more faithful ; missionaries more numerous ; almsgivers more bountiful ; and the Church more peaceful, if all did thus ? *Oh pray for the peace of Jerusalem* in this way, and for all our fellow-Christians in all Churches throughout the world ; and then if Sion prosper not, at least they will prosper who love her.

And finally—why should we ever pass by an open Church, without entering it, and at least doing as did the publican ? On week-days—in strange cities—anywhere, where GOD’s holy house invites us in—why not make a prayer, or offer one, and go on our way rejoicing ?

Some quietly practise already what is thus recommended. Conversing lately with a brother, and speaking on this point, the writer was glad to be answered some-

what, as follows: "Why, such has been my practice for a long time, and I know several of my friends who do the same, without saying anything about it, and indeed feeling a little awkward if observed for it. But I'm glad to know that the good SPIRIT of GOD has put it into more hearts than ours."

If you approve these remarks, reader, let your SAVIOUR know it, by adopting the habit; and if others find it out, they may follow your example.* So perhaps you may be the means of saving some brother from forgetting GOD and his duty.

I subjoin some introductory remarks, on the Feast of St. Andrew, as it governs the season of Advent, and leads the choir of minor feasts. For this there is reason of congruity. The readiness of the true Israelites for the first Advent furnishes an example to us who expect the second; and Andrew was the first called to be an Apostle, and the first to announce the Messiah, as such, to his brother St. Peter, as we read in the Gospel of St. John. These holy brothers were among those who "feared the name of the LORD," according to the injunction of the prophet, in those days of waiting which supervened upon the closing of the line of great prophets, which began with Samuel and ended with Malachi. Hence in them was fulfilled the promise of Malachi—"unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing in His wings."

The Collect for the day, accordingly, embodies this idea of *readiness*, and of unworldliness in obedience. We pray for grace to imitate the Apostle, in prompt obedience to

* [The great point, as it appears to the Editor, in all such practices, is, that those who use them should not *rest* in them, as ensuring their own salvation, and that they should not despise others who use them not.]

the admonitions of the Gospel, and to the commandments of GOD's Law. The Epistle sets forth the glory of the Gospel ministry, of which St. Andrew was an original dispenser, on the borders of the Black Sea, near Sinope, and about the now famous region of the Crimea, and Sebastopol. The Gospel is a brief history of his call into the apostolic ministry, after his original introduction to the SAVIOUR, as a disciple of John the Baptist. St. Andrew is said to have completed his work, as an Apostle, at Patræ in Achaia, where he was dreadfully scourged by the heathen magistrate, and then fixed to a cross of the figure of the letter X, which, in the Greek language, is the initial of the name of CHRIST.

The Proper Lessons for the day are from the Book of Proverbs, and contain instructions suited to any season, but not otherwise special to the feast. It appears to be the wisdom of the Church, to exercise her children on these minor festivals, by lessons from which they may select for themselves such particular counsels as the spirit of the day may have adapted to the mind and heart, under the guidance of the HOLY GHOST.



Thoughts on the Services.

Advent Sunday.

THE Sun of Righteousness is the great centre around which the Church revolves, and her ritual year begins with a renewal of His glorious light and warmth. Thus it happens, that in the kingdom of heaven we live in advance of the world ; we are a whole month on our way, before the civil year begins. In this manner we are taught to be ever on the alert, “ looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God.”

This feast of the Advent, which opens the Advent Season, is one which strongly mingles the most joyous with the most appalling thoughts ; for while it strikes the key-note of our Christmas rejoicings, it dwells on the first Advent with especial reference to its bearings on that which is yet future, and for which we are called to prepare. Our “ song is of mercy and of judgment.”

Nothing can be conceived more salutary to the soul than this annual awakening and setting forward towards Immortality ; and the Advent Season should always be made one of discipline, and of solemn meditation and reading on the Four Last Things—Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell ; for all Time is but the prelude to Judgment and Eternity.

In the Christian Year, Advent Sunday answers to the day in the Mosaic year, when the “trumpet was blown in Zion,” preparatory to the Feast of Tabernacles. As Christmas is the Christian Feast of Tabernacles, the analogy is complete. A proper anthem for the day may be made of the striking words of the Psalmist—“Bow thy heavens, oh Lord, and come down ; touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.” In some such thrilling passage of Scripture is often condensed the entire spirit of a feast-day ; and here we have that longing after God, which is the instinct of the Church, His Spouse, and which says “come quickly” where the world would delay.

The First Lesson begins the Prophet Isaiah, who is always read in Advent for the Old Testament Lesson, because Isaiah is the *Evangelist* of the older Scriptures, and abounds with predictions of both Advents of the LORD JESUS. On this account Isaiah is omitted in the regular order of the prophets, and is reserved till this time, both in the ordinary and special tables of Lessons.

This Lesson will be found full of the judgments of the LORD, respecting justice, mercy, and truth, showing what He will require of us at the last day ; but it also suits the occasion, as setting forth the requirements of GOD with respect to the Ecclesiastical Year now opening, " its new-moons, and Sabbaths and appointed feasts." GOD appointed these observances under the Law, yet because of the iniquity, oppression, and blood-guiltiness of His people He was forced to say—" My soul hateth them ; they are a trouble unto Me ; I am weary to bear them." There can be no doubt that, in like manner, the Christian festivals, however precious to GOD when kept in spirit and in truth, are hateful to Him, if defiled by practical irreligion or unbelief, by cruelty to the poor and needy, or neglect of any of our fellow-creatures in their temporal and spiritual wants.

Most suitable for meditation at this season is that pictorial opening of the Gospel by St. Luke, in which the announcement of the First Advent is made to Zacharias and to the Virgin Mary. It contains the salutation of Gabriel, and the Blessed Virgin's response—" Be it unto me according to thy word," in which the perfection of faith, and hope, and unquestioning obedience are so beautifully illustrated by this meek " handmaid of the LORD." It is designed to prepare us for Christmas, and at the same time to remind us by the fulfilment of the promises respecting that first

coming, that the Judgment is no less certain in its time. When the appointed day arrives, the Archangel will again appear, and with his voice, and the sound of a trumpet, proclaim the general resurrection, and the gathering of all nations in the Valley of Decision. No one can attentively study the words of this Gospel without emotion, as the great events to which the inspired Evangelist introduces us are rehearsed with all the effect of brilliant portraiture.

In the Litany, let the mind dwell on the petitions which relate to the Incarnation, and on that which supplicates deliverance in the hour of death and in the day of Judgment.

The Introit* will be, perhaps, the fiftieth Psalm; or its spirited version, verses 3, 4:—

“ Our God shall come, and keep no more
Misconstrued silence as before,
But wafting flames before Him send.”

The Collect for the day is a sublime petition, illustrating the original idea of such a prayer, which is that it *collects*, or gathers together, the prominent parts of the Service for the day, and reduces them to a practical offering of mingled prayer and praise to God. Thus the Epistle which bids us to “cast off the works of darkness,” and the Gospel, which exhibits the “great humility” of the first Advent, are united in the

* For explanation of this word, see Preface.

petition that we may be prepared for the glorious majesty in which He shall come to judge the quick and the dead, and for the award of immortality which is the inheritance of the just. Reflect especially on the language of the Epistle, that "it is high time to awake out of sleep," that "the night is far spent, and the day is at hand;" and connect it mentally with the beautiful imagery of the prophet, "Watchman, what of the night? The morning cometh, and also the night." The resurrection draws nigh, though we must first sleep in the night of death. Awake, and pray the Saviour that He would give us light, that He would fill our vessel with oil, and replenish our lamps, and then we may lie down in our graves, and have no fear that our lamps will have gone out, when the cry is made, and the Bridegroom cometh.

The Gospel is designed to contrast the meek and lowly appearance of the great King in the days of His flesh, with the royal splendours which shall surround His coming in the clouds of Heaven.

If there be a celebration of the Holy Communion, dwell on the thought that many shall say in that day, "we have eaten and drunk in thy presence," to whom the Judge shall answer, "I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." The Eucharistic

hymn may be selected to relate to the Judgment; e. g. :—

“ How will my heart endure
The terrors of that day,
When earth and heaven, before His face,
Astonished shrink away.”

At Evening Prayer the First Lesson contains many marked allusions to the day of the Lord, “ when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth.” It is customary, in some churches, to provide a Judgment-anthem; but perhaps nothing is more impressive to the ordinary worshipper than the solemn singing of a part of the familiar hymn :—

“ Great God, what do I see and hear !
The end of things created.”

So solemn a day ought to be concluded in the family in an appropriate way, and afterwards in the closet. For private reading, nothing could be more appropriate than the impressive words of our LORD, Matt. xxv. 31 :—“ When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy Angels with Him; then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory.” In fact, the earnest Christian would do well to begin with the preceding chapter of St. Matthew, and to read devoutly the whole of the SAVIOUR’S Advent Sermon. So may he spend a good day, and lie down at night, at peace with GOD, and, by His undeserved mercy, ready for the Judgment-trumpet, let it sound when it may.

Second Sunday in Advent.



THIS day is designed to set before us the great truth, that the Holy Scriptures are given us to prepare us for Judgment, as well as to testify of CHRIST. The "testimony of JESUS is the spirit of prophecy," and the word that He spake "the same shall judge us at the last day." Accordingly, the Lesson from the Prophet Isaiah is a strong remonstrance against the iniquities which shall be punished in the Great Day of Account.

In the Collect we entreat Almighty GOD for grace to use aright the Holy Scriptures, which are "able to make us wise unto salvation." Thus, we acknowledge the Bible to be the counterpart on earth of the Book of Account which is kept in heaven; and the spirit of our prayer is, that it may be to us an assurance that our names are written in that Book of Life, which shall be opened at the last day.

The Epistle is the portion of Scripture which supplies, in part, the language of the Collect, and which is further appropriate, because it sets forth CHRIST as the "Root of Jesse" and the hope of the Gentiles. The Gospel makes itself felt, as an overwhelmingly sublime prediction of the Last Day, and of the fearful signs which shall precede it. It

was the custom of the Ancient Prophets to give an immediate sign or fulfilment of their words, in token that the ultimate fulfilment would be as certain. Our LORD, therefore, gave the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Jewish Church and State as the immediate token or fulfilment of what He predicted concerning the destruction of all things temporal. Improbable as it then appeared that such a sign would prove a reality before that generation of men passed from the stage of human life, we all know that it actually came to pass, and that the Jewish people have ever since been wanderers over the face of all the earth. Thus then the whole prophecy is fulfilled in earnest or pledge, and we cannot doubt that it will be so in its entire length and breadth. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but CHRIST's word shall not pass away. This concluding text of the Gospel for the day continues the great idea of the Collect, that the word of GOD is the sure monitor and guide of the faithful.

Among other suitable hymns, none is more appropriate to follow the Gospel than that simple and touching paraphrase :—

“ Ah, how shall fallen man
Be just before his GOD ! ”

In the Evening Lesson, the worshipper will not fail to note the prophetic words concerning the times in which we are now living, as premonitory of the Judgment : “ The earth mourneth and

fadeth away; the world languisheth and fadeth away; the haughty people of the earth do languish." The concluding verse of the chapter is scarcely less striking—"The moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his Ancients, gloriously."

Third Sunday in Advent.

BEHOLD, I send my messenger before thy face who shall prepare my way before thee." This prophecy has a double fulfilment. In one sense it has already come to pass. John the Baptist was the Elijah who heralded the first coming of CHRIST. But the Apostolic ministry is the John Baptist of the latter day, heralding the Second Advent and the coming of the Judge.

Accordingly the Church to-day dwells on the Christian Ministry and its great Mission, in connection with a retrospect of that of the Baptist, as its precursor. There is a marvellous blending of interests and of subjects therefore in the Services of this day. As a mere preparation for Christmas, the ministry of John Baptist might well come into view; but again, as a preparation for Judgment it is not less co-incident, for its burthen was and is—"flee from the wrath to come." With this

message that of the Gospel Ministry is strictly harmonious, and the subject of eternal rewards and punishments is thus presented with that of Death and Judgment.

The Collect will be found to sum up what is thus asserted with reference to the spirit of the day. The Epistle, short as it is, is admirably selected, as a condensed statement of the commission of CHRIST's ministers, and of the relations sustained by them and by those that hear them to the bar of GOD. They are not merely ministers of the Word, but "Stewards of the mysteries," that is, ministers of the Sacraments and other means of grace, for the administration of which they bear "the keys of the kingdom." They bind and loose, and open and shut; and when they do so *according to the laws of the kingdom*, then what they do on earth is ratified in heaven.

The Gospel is the testimony which our LORD gave to John Baptist, as His faithful steward and forerunner; and cites the prophetic promise of such a messenger, which serves to identify both John and his Master. At the same time it bears on the Epistle, as showing that it was "a light thing" for John, as it was for St. Paul, "to be judged of man's judgment," and that He that judgeth both is the LORD. Thus some said of John that he was "a reed shaken in the wind;" others, that he was a time-server; and others, that he had a devil: but here we see his Master setting the seal

to his work, as that of a prophet, and more than a prophet.

It is in beautiful harmony with a Sunday-Service so forcibly setting forth the nature of the Ministry of the Gospel, that the Ember-fasts occur in this week and that the following Sunday is the Advent time for Ordinations. The Ember Collect used to-day, at Morning and Evening Prayer, falls in with happy effect with the entire services.

In the First Lesson, at Morning Prayer, is a prophecy of all the blessings of the Incarnation, Sacrifice, and Resurrection of CHRIST. The nature of the Advent Season is brought out in the experience of the faithful—"Lo, this is our GOD, *we have waited for Him.*" This patient waiting for Christ will thus be rewarded at the day of His appearing. Observe, too, the prophecy of a crucified SAVIOUR, in the words, "He shall spread forth His hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim."

[In the First Lesson, at Evening Prayer, our hearts are prepared for the awful scenes of judgment—awful even to the elect and saved—by exhortations to trust in Him before whose throne we shall then stand. In Him "is everlasting strength;" and He will "keep in perfect peace," notwithstanding the terrors which usher in the last great day of account, "him that trusteth in Him." We are taught that even in that "great and ter-

rible day of the LORD," after a little moment "the indignation will be overpast," and that when the LORD has punished the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, those His saints who dwell in dust shall "awake and sing."]*

Ember Week in Advent.



HOW free are many to speak ill of their pastors and teachers, who have never uttered in their behalf a single prayer ! How many profess a singular desire for the purity of the priesthood who never fasted a day to ask of GOD this blessing ! Yet the Church hallows Four Seasons for this end, which she bids her children spend in abstinence and prayer ; and, perhaps, if they were better kept, both the people and their pastors would better adorn the doctrine of GOD their Saviour. These seasons are called technically, the *Quatuor Tempora*, or the *four times*, that is to say, *of ordination* ; for the Sundays immediately succeeding these days of prayer are appointed by the ancient and modern Canons as the stated times for ordaining. Vulgarly, the *Quatuor Tempora* were called *Quatember*, and finally *Ember*

* Passages marked thus are inserted by the Editor, and he alone is responsible for them. He has only done so in the way of reflections upon the seasons appointed by our Church, when they differ, as they often do, from those in the American Book of Prayer.

weeks : the usage being very ancient and the name having undergone the changes incidental to the lapse of ages. But whatever be the name, no one can dispute its propriety or the Scripture warrant for the institution itself.

Fourth Sunday in Advent.



THE services to-day are singularly illustrative of the mingled character of Advent, containing, as it does, allusions to Judgment, Death, Hell, and Heaven, and interchanging the call to joy and gladness with warnings of fiery indignation. In distributing the subjects of the Four Last Things, it is appropriate to this day to dwell on that of Heaven, as the natural antecedent of the Nativity which brings heaven down to earth ; and as the great result to which the coming of CHRIST was designed to bring mankind.

In the first Morning Lesson, among those passages which especially relate to the Season should be noted such as these : “ The LORD is a GOD of Judgment ; blessed are all they that wait for Him. . . . Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with His anger ; and the burden thereof is heavy : . . . For Tophet is ordained of old.” This Tophet is the place of everlasting punishment “ prepared for the king,” that is, the

prince of darkness, the devil and his angels; but, on the other hand, the promise of reward and blessing is presented in the words—"Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."

As a prelude to the worship of Christmas Eve, every one accustomed to that cheerful observance must have marked the text—"Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept: and gladness of hearts, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the LORD, to the mighty One of Israel."

In the Evening Lesson we have, with other passages of solemn interest, the promise of the Incarnation. God shall become man, and, as the Son of man, shall wear rightfully the titles of the God of Israel: yea—"A man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great Rock in a weary land."

He who in the figurative language of the prophet is a hiding-place, a covert, a great Rock, and the like, is explained by the Apostle to be "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption."

As the Introit, part of the 72nd Psalm is appropriate—"Give the king thy judgments, oh God,

and thy righteousness unto the king's son. . . . He shall come down like the rain into a fleece of wool, even as the drops that water the earth."

The Collect was anciently addressed to CHRIST Himself, but is now addressed to the FATHER, in recognition of the truths that CHRIST is "of GOD, made unto us redemption;" that GOD the FATHER comes unto us in His SON; and that in CHRIST "dwelleth all the fulness of the GOD-HEAD bodily." We, therefore, pray the FATHER to reconcile the world unto Himself, by the coming of His SON, which we are now about to celebrate.

The Epistle closes up the Season of Advent discipline with a call to spiritual festivity. "Rejoice! . . . the LORD is at hand." The Gospel is the testimony of John to the SAVIOUR, "who coming after Him, is preferred before Him." CHRIST Himself testified of John, that he was "the greatest born of women"—that is, by natural generation: yet John says of CHRIST, "Whose shoes' latchet I am not worthy to unloose." Infer from this the Godhead of CHRIST; and "consider how great this man was"—this great Melchisedec, to whom Abraham gave tithes, and John Baptist paid such tribute as this; saying elsewhere, "He *was* before me," though here he says, "He cometh after me." In His Godhead, though not in His humanity, CHRIST was before all worlds, and says, of Himself, "Before Abraham was, I AM."

Christmas Eve.

VE come to the great Eve of the Nativity, and the Church has appointed for its observance two most appropriate Lessons. The first is the gorgeous prophecy of Isaiah, descriptive of Messiah's peaceful kingdom—"Arise, shine, for thy light is come; and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee." This Lesson is the rather striking, because it comes of itself into its place this evening, according to the regular Advent reading of the prophet, and is not otherwise selected than as it thus fits into its time, as if by providential coincidence. Yet, the decoration of our churches, on this evening, would seem to have been especially designed to illustrate this Lesson—in the rapturous verse—"The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious." Of the Second Lesson it is also true, that it comes by chance, rather than that it is selected: yet how strikingly appropriate is the passage—"Every spirit that confesseth that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh, is of GOD!" So too—"We have seen, and do testify that the FATHER sent the SON to be the Saviour of the world:" and "GOD sent His only-begotten Son into the world,

that we might live through Him." Other verses are scarcely less appropriate.

For private reading and meditation, on an evening like this, we might select the 85th and 97th Psalms, as peculiarly appropriate.

Thus the 97th Psalm contains the expression—"Worship him all ye gods," which St. Paul renders—"Let all the angels of GOD worship Him," and which he refers to GOD the FATHER, who gives this command, "when He bringeth in the first-begotten into the world." It would have been difficult to have made a selection more entirely suitable; and although the 85th is repeated on Christmas morning, it is impossible that a foretaste of it can diminish the joy with which every devout worshipper will join in the song, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

Where it is customary on this Eve to sing anthems, a great variety of them might be suggested. The most appropriate seems to be that from Handel's Messiah—"There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night;" followed by the chorus—"Glory to GOD in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men."

Few congregations are willing to leave the church without the Carol,

"Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King;

Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners, reconciled."

The writer can also testify, from frequent experience of such kindness on the part of musical parishioners, that in some places the "Waits" still go round late in the evening, and never cease till the minister has been saluted with this and other carols beneath his windows.

With respect to the festival itself, some are disposed to regard the date of the Nativity as chosen arbitrarily, and to be respected as the Ecclesiastical, but not the natural, anniversary. Every Christian is free to hold this opinion; but there are many reasons for regarding it as the true date, which incline others to believe it to be such. In fact it is as well established as many other historical dates that are accepted without hesitation: but we should always hesitate to exact too much in a matter so entirely unimportant.

It ought to suffice us that it is an observance which seems to have been anticipated by the Law, in which the Feast of Tabernacles answers to Christmas as the Paschal Feast does to Easter, and Pentecost to Whitsuntide. They celebrated the typical presence of CHRIST in the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, as we do the great fact that "the WORD was made flesh and dwelt among us;" or, as it is in the Greek, "*tabernacled* among us." Besides, this feast has been kept from the

very beginning of the Christian Era, as we learn from St. Chrysostom ; and its date was commonly supposed to be verified by the date of the taxing made under Cæsar Augustus, and by the records thereof kept at Rome. We know that St. John lived into the second century ; and as he was the adopted son of the Blessed Virgin, (made so by CHRIST Himself on the Cross,) we cannot suppose him to have been ignorant of the true birth-day of his Divine “ Elder Brother”—nor yet that he could have failed to make it known to the Churches in which he ministered.* Be that as it may, the festival has been so long hallowed, and is so full of the spirit of the Gospel, that no right-minded person can fail to enjoy it. Long may it be the peculiar joy of children, and the season of the gathering of families ; “ of sending portions to those for whom nothing is prepared ;” of gifts to the poor, and of universal good-will : even as it is written—“ Go your way—eat the fat and drink the sweet, . . . and send portions, and make great mirth : go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine-branches, and myrtle-branches, and palm-branches, and branches of thick trees, . . . for this day is holy unto our LORD, . . . for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

* This is of course mere conjecture.—ED.

Christmas Day.



Tis a good custom to divide the solemnities of this glorious feast, when it can be so done conveniently, so as to have Morning-prayer at sunrise: the Holy Communion, with sermon, at 10 or 11 o'clock; and the Evening-prayer at sunset. In treating of the solemnities of the day, we shall suppose such to be their arrangement.*

How beautifully breaks the morning sun on the snowy landscape, enlivening the cold air, and dispelling the darkness; so shines forth the Sun of Righteousness upon the winter of man's ruined estate, and gives light to his eyes and gladness to his heart. Well may Christians salute each other with congratulations, and by acts of kindness and tenderness to the poor proclaim the universal brotherhood of mankind in **JESUS CHRIST**.

The proper Psalms for the morning illustrate the spirit of the feast in strains of rapture and adoration indited by the **SPIRIT** and descriptive of the only-begotten **SON** of the **FATHER**. His

* Of course this practice, and others peculiar, or nearly so, to the American Church are not set forth as of necessity desirable among ourselves; but some of them, and this among the number, are worthy of our consideration.—**ED.**

gospel “ goes forth into all lands,” and “ there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.” To Him, in the 45th Psalm, the FATHER addresses the salutation—“ Thou art fairer than the children of men. . . . Gird thee with thy sword upon thy thigh, oh thou most mighty. . . . Good luck have thou with thine honour. . . . Thy Seat, oh GOD, endureth for ever.” In this connection too the Church is introduced, as the bride of CHRIST, coming before Him in her glorious attire and worshipping Him as her LORD GOD. St. Cyprian regards this Psalm not less as a special prophecy of the Incarnation, but refers it primarily to the eternal generation of the SON, reading the first verse of it—“My heart hath generated a blessed Word,” and considering it the language of the FATHER to the SON, rather than that of the Psalmist to the Messiah.

The First Lesson is very short, but perhaps it is the sublimest passage in the prophets. “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.” What follows—say the critics—should be read as an interrogation—as if it were—“Hast thou multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy?”* To which the prophet responds, in view of the union of all nations in exulting over a Redeemer’s

* Or, “Thou hast multiplied the nation, and to them (the word translated ‘not’ in our version being ambiguous) increased the joy.”—ED.

birth—"They joy before Thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil." He then makes a bold lyrical transition to another view of the first Advent, as "a battle of the warrior" with the powers of darkness: and its terrible results to the Jewish Nation are pre-signified by the warning—"This shall be with burning and fuel of fire." The conflagration of the Temple under Titus was the terrible consequence of Jewish unbelief in their promised Messiah; and while exulting in the prophecy of Gentile converts, the inspired lyricist makes this apostrophe to the sad reverse of Gentile joy exhibited among his own people. Then follows that magnificent burst of adoration and of faith—"For unto us a child is born; unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting FATHER, the Prince of Peace."

It is impossible that anything should be added to this to heighten its effect, except that after the *Te Deum* the Lesson from the Gospel narrates the fulfilment of the prophecy in strains scarcely less elevated. How simple yet how sublime the narrative of the Virgin's arrival at Bethlehem; of the pastoral scenes in the neighbouring fields; of the great light that shined upon them, and of the message of the Angel! Who can look upon a Christian congregation gathered together

on Christmas Day, without feeling the fidelity of the promise—"I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

But the service still culminates, for the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel take up the worship at this point, and carry it on to the elevated stage of devotion, where the Holy Eucharist becomes our only sufficient expression of gratitude and praise. The 110th Psalm forms a majestic Introit: "The dew of thy birth is of the womb of the morning." From beginning to end it is full of "Messiah the Prince," and of the blessings of His Covenant; and hence it is one of the appointed Psalms for Evening Prayer. The Collect not only celebrates our SAVIOUR's birth "of a pure Virgin," but recognizing the exceeding great "love bestowed on us" that we also should be "called the Sons of GOD," it supplicates for that daily renewal of grace, by which our sonship may be preserved, and we may be made eternally "heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs with CHRIST."

The Epistle is not only appropriate for its majestic proclamation of the advent of the SON of GOD, fulfilling the Law and the Prophets, but also for the sequel to this proclamation which defines His glory and divinity. CHRIST is not an angel but by inheritance far better: He is "the SON of the FATHER"—and where was this title ever given to any angel? Or when did GOD say of any created being—"Let all the angels of GOD

worship him?" Of the angels GOD saith certain things, defining their character and office; but the SON He addresses as GOD, the co-partner of His own throne and sceptre. Yes, continues the Apostle,—to the same JESUS is addressed the language which defines Him as alike the Creator, and the Judge of the world: "Thou, LORD, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thine hands." Again, "As a vesture, Thou shalt fold them up, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." Such, then, is the little babe whom we have seen "wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." His name is LORD and GOD: the stars of heaven are the work of His fingers, and He shall dispose of them at the last. Now follows the Gospel, and the jubilant shout—"Glory be to Thee, oh LORD"—may well precede it. "In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with GOD, and the WORD was GOD." Thus the Evangelist declares His generation before the world was, His creative power and His Godhead. How is it that the Eternal GOD is born of a woman? The great mystery of the Incarnation is finally asserted in these divine words—"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld His Glory; the Glory as of the only-begotten of the FATHER, full of Grace and Truth." Here the Nicene Creed is introduced, and there is no moment in

the worship of the entire year where its lofty strains of confession and worship come in with equal effect. The Gospel, which immediately precedes it, seems to prolong itself in this Creed, as in a sublime hymn, in which the Church responsively salutes CHRIST as what the Gospel proclaims Him, and lays her tribute at His feet.

It is important to observe the Preface, which introduces the Trisagion,* in the Holy Communion, as of like significance with the Creed, and as blending all Angels with the Church Catholic in the ascription of this festal homage to the blessed Trinity, in view of the great humility of GOD the SON. From the holy feast that follows, who can turn away without sharing the emotions of the shepherds of Bethlehem, who “ returned praising and blessing GOD for the things they had seen and heard ? ”

At the Evening Prayer, which closes this blessed day, the Psalms are again admirably selected. In the 89th, the covenant of GOD with David and with the greater Son of David, is the burthen of the Psalmist’s “ song of mercy and of judgment.” Of the 110th, what has been said in speaking of the Introit may suffice ; only let it be noted that in the last verse CHRIST is exhibited in His power and His resurrection, as a mighty victor who lifts

* Thrice Holy, referring to the, “ Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts,” in the Communion Service.

up his head indeed at the end of the fight, but not without stooping in the heat of the battle to "drink of the brook in the way ;" or, in other words, to feel the suffering and to share the nourishment of the poorest of human beings. In the 132nd Psalm, "Ephrata," it must be remembered, is Bethlehem ; and "the Anointed" is the Messiah, or CHRIST. Viewing Him as the Son of David, born in Bethlehem the City of David, it will be seen that the whole Psalm is appropriate to the day, and speaks of the blessings promised to the Church in the oath which was confirmed to the Royal Prophet—"Of the fruit of thy body shall I set upon thy seat."

The feast of Christmas reigns over the whole time till Twelfth-night or the Epiphany. Let the day itself then be sacred to the house of God, and to the joys of Home ; and let such restrained festivity as is innocent in itself be reserved for other days of this Holy tide.*

The First Sunday after Christmas.



HIS Sunday always falls within the Octave of Christmas, and hence repeats its Collects, and is a sort of Lower Christmas. Its Epistle shows

* A suggestion to which many families among us would do well to take heed, at any rate so far as to modify the merely worldly rejoicings of Christmas Day.

us how we are made sons of GOD by adoption and grace, through the Incarnation of GOD's only-begotten, and what an heirship we have with Him ; while the Gospel repeats the story of this great mystery, and shows that it was intimated to the Hebrews in the name IMMANUEL. As the last Sunday of the year, it has a special solemnity, and is furnished with Lessons not unsuitable to the use very often made of the day by zealous pastors, in reviewing a year of mercies. [The First Lesson for the Morning Service recalls the wonderful preservation of Jerusalem when beleaguered by infuriated enemies. It introduces the pious Hezekiah calling to mind the strength of the living GOD, and the utter nothingness of the gods in whose overthrow Sennacherib was boasting himself, and from such considerations calmly committing his cause to Him who alone is the GOD of all the kingdoms of the earth. Is not this a suggestive thought for us? Does it not teach us, from a consideration of the year just past, to spread before the LORD the trials and threatening dangers of the year to come without a fear or a misgiving?

In the Lesson appointed for the Evening, the close of a period of grace is well marked by the threatened close of Hezekiah's life. The solemn warning: "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live," is one which strikes home with a peculiar force to the hearts of those who

listen to it at the close of another year of their short and uncertain lives. The dread even of good Hezekiah as he drew near to the gates of the grave; his fears "lest he should not see the LORD, even the LORD, in the land of the living," are well calculated to teach us the inestimable privilege which we possess, so far beyond the saints of the old Covenant, in that we *know* that "Christ is risen from the dead, the firstfruits of them that sleep," and that "as in Adam all die even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Nor is it an unsuitable resolution with which to commence another year of life and hope: "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth."]

The Circumcision.

THE Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by JESUS CHRIST. The year begins with the day on which the Holy Child *made of a woman* submits to the legal rite which makes Him a debtor to the Law, and designates Him as "*made under the Law*, to redeem those that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." To-day His saving work began in blood, and being circumcised He undertook to fulfil the Law; which

He alone perfectly fulfilled, and so showed the Law to be "holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." This day He received also His saving name of JESUS, the name at which every knee shall bow; and therefore in the name of JESUS, our Saviour and Redeemer, we begin the new year; praying Him for that circumcision of the spirit which will enable us to live or die unto the LORD—according to His will.

There are no proper Psalms for this feast: but the Psalms for the day are surely not inappropriate. The *First Psalm* describes the man of circumcised affections and of habits disciplined to GOD's holy law, and the *Second* speaks of the things which GOD has ordained concerning His Everlasting Son, revealed in Time as JESUS the Son of David. The thoughtful Christian will discern in the other Psalms a tone of holy fear very appropriate to the beginning of a year, and such expressions of trust in GOD, and of prayer for His protection as become well the heart and lips of a pilgrim on earth setting forth anew towards the city that hath foundations. We may further note concerning the Psalms for the day, that the *Second* for the Morning, and the *Seventh* for the Evening, will be found full of thoughts and expressions admirably fitted to New Year's Day, and proper enough to the festival. Thus, to select almost at random, how timely the good resolution, "Every day will I give thanks unto Thee;" or the con-

foling promise, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." Many other texts quite as fitting will be found among the Psalms for the first day of the New Year.

The Morning Lessons explain each other, and teach us how to read and compare the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The First Evening Lesson sets forth the spiritual nature of the Law as requiring the circumcision of the heart as well as its ritual symbol. The Second Lesson teaches us that Holy Baptism answers to circumcision; and also unfolds its superiority as a sacrament to those ordinances of the Law that were its shadows.

In the Communion Service, the Epistle explains how all the faithful become the sons of Abraham, though they have not the outward circumcision of the flesh; and the Holy Gospel continues the Christmas story to the octave of the Nativity, when the Son of Mary received the name of JESUS, according to the prophecies which went before on Him.

If we would walk with God this year, let us commence it with the holy resolutions which this feast is meant to inspire—a mortification of our worldly lusts, and a holy spirit of "running with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto JESUS, the Author and Finisher of our Faith."

Second Sunday after Christmas.


WHEN there is a Second Sunday after Christmas, it falls so soon after the Circumcision, that it is considered a part of that feast, and its Altar-Service is repeated. But special Lessons are appointed, nevertheless, and an opportunity is given for bringing out the double idea of the Circumcision. Christ's obedience to the Law for man, and His "coming by blood," as well as afterward "by water;" this is the first thought; the second also revives that of the saving NAME OF JESUS, "As the name which is above every name, and to which every knee shall bow." This name specially prefigured in that of Joshua, and prenamed by the angel Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin, is the name assumed by the Eternal Word of GOD on taking our nature; it means a Saviour; and it designates the way of Salvation through the veil of His flesh.

Now "the king's Name is a tower of strength;" and the First Lesson may be regarded as setting forth the might and power which GOD's people possess in the name of Him who is their "strength and their Redeemer." The Incarnate GOD; this is the thing signified by the name of a man given to the Son of GOD; and this is that truth in which

the Gospel finds free course, and glorifies itself among men.

[The Evening Lesson specially calls our thoughts to GOD, not only as our CREATOR, but as our REDEEMER, and bids us rest upon Him in sure confidence and hope. He who was at this time born into the world a little child, is He who is called by Isaiah the LORD GOD, the Holy One of Israel, the SAVIOUR; "I, even I," He says by the mouth of the prophet, "am the LORD: and beside Me there is no SAVIOUR." We are reminded of our sins, that we have not called upon GOD, but have been weary of Him: and our thoughts are fixed on the remedy which as at this time began to be provided: "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."]

Epiphany.

 HIS festival, called also Twelfth-day, is one of peculiar interest to those who realize the great power of GOD, by which we Gentiles have received the Gospel. On this day came the firstfruits of the Gentiles to pay homage to the new-born King of Nations; thus rendering an early representative acknowledgment of His lawful right in behalf of all the Gentile world. As for us, who dwell in

these "uttermoſt parts of the earth," which were peculiarly given to the only-begotten Son for His inheritance, there ſeems a great propriety that we ſhould keep the feaſt with a willing and a holy worſhip; preſenting ourſelves before GOD, on its recurrence, as living witneſſes that thoſe "who ſat in darkneſs have ſeen a great light."

The ſong of Simeon may be uſed to-day, if not during the Seaſon, as an Anthem.

In the Daily Morning and Evening Prayer, we obſerve a very beautiful and delicate judgment in the appointment of Leſſons. As the word Epiphany implies a glorious ſhining or manifeſtation, there can be no need of pointing out the propriety of the. Firſt Morning Leſſon, which begins with a blaze of glory; the whole of which is ſo cheering a prediction of the ingathering of the nations; and in which the viſit of the wiſe men is particularly propheſied, in the paſſage, "They ſhall bring gold and incenſe." We may profitably read and compare with it that ſolemn warning (Romans xi.) in which the great Doctör of the Gentiles calls on his converts to be humble, and not to copy the Jew in deſpiſing others, as being now themſelves a choſen people; informing them that if GOD had dealt ſo ſeverely with His former people as to cut them off for their barrenneſs, it was evident that the Gentiles, who were but grafted into the good old olive-tree, would not be more tenderly treated if they too ſhould prove cumberers of the

ground. The two chapters taken together are calculated to produce a most happy effect upon the heart of the truly devout believer. The one calls him to give God glory for the unspeakable blessings of the Gospel; and the other to fear before Him, lest the richness of the gift should by neglect bring in the end a greater condemnation. The latter suggests some serious ideas with respect to the future prospects of the Jews, and the fulfilling of "the times of the Gentiles;" as well as, in the concluding verse, a humbling view of our ability to foresee how or in what degree the mercies of CHRIST through the Gospel are to abound to all mankind.

When we reflect however that the Apostle is addressing the Church of Rome in her virgin purity, it does certainly seem as if he were intimating her awful apostacy and rejection, when he says so solemnly—"Because of unbelief they were broken off, and *thou standest by faith; be not high-minded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God: toward thee goodness, if thou continue in His goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*" Here certainly is no intimation even of indefectibility in the See of Rome: and we are possibly beholding the days in which this awful excision is near. Let us also fear and not triumph in so great a downfall!

The Evening Lessons, in like manner, will impress the thoughtful mind with a pleasing sense of propriety. The first is in the same vein of prophetic rapture, which characterizes all the promises of the Gospel Day which were made to the Ancient Church by the burning lips of Isaiah. The second, which is repeated as the Gospel on the second Sunday, is the history of one of the *Epiphanies*; for the ancient name of this feast is in the plural, and includes the commemoration, besides that of the visit of the Magi, of the first miracle, and of the baptism of our LORD, in which He was first manifested to Israel.

On this day we might well select to sing from the metrical version of the Psalms :—

“ The Kings of Tarshish and the Isles
Shall costly presents bring.”

In the Altar Service, the Epistle is appropriately taken from St. Paul, to show the might and grace of GOD in making that Apostle a “ chosen vessel of His name to the Gentiles :” and the Gospel is the picturesque narrative of the wise men’s visit, as given by St. Matthew. It would not be becoming perhaps to lament that proper Psalms have not been appointed for this feast, including of course the 72nd, and enabling us to repeat the prophecy, “ The kings of Arabia and Sabah shall bring gifts ;” but a devout worshipper, before service begins, may get the benefit of that Psalm and of the 65th, which is also strikingly appropriate.

It is scarcely necessary to say that in ancient tradition these wise men were kings: (Ps. lxxii. 10.) Bishop Taylor calls them "the Levantine Princes," and adopts the beautiful comment of St. Hilary, that their gifts were symbolical, *the gold* of tribute to a king—*the incense* of adoration to God—the *myrrh* of recognition as a mortal and a man of sorrows. With Twelfth-night the Christmas holidays conclude.

The First Sunday after the Epiphany.



HE Sundays after the Epiphany tranquilly bear us along in the growing light of the Sun of Righteousness now manifested to the world.

In the *Morning Prayer* this day we note the First Lesson as selected with primary reference to its awful rebuke of Idolatry, from which the heathen were called by the Star of Bethlehem to the worship and service of the living God. Besides this the beautiful passage, "I will pour out water upon him that is thirsty," and the anthem, "Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it," sufficiently mark it as proper to this holy season of spiritual refreshing. We may read with it from the New Testament (Mat. ii. 13) the story of the wise men's visit, and subjoin the narrative of its

immediate consequences, the flight into Egypt, and the martyrdom of the Holy Innocents.

[In the *Evening Prayer*, the First Lesson contains the appropriate call to the nations: "Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted that are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness." The picture drawn at the commencement of the chapter of the final destruction of all the idols of the nations; the prophecy whose fulfilment was so complete: "Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth;" the triumphant comparison between Him who could carry them "even to hoar hairs, and deliver them," and the gods carried upon the shoulder, which could not answer nor save those that cried unto them;—all these things may well be dwelt upon as suggesting the time when the Gentiles should forsake their idols, and confess Him who was indeed the living God, "manifest in the flesh."]

The old Introit, appointed by the Anglican Reformers, was the *Usque quo, Domine*, or 13th Psalm. To see its application we must suppose it the song of the wise men, recounting their almost despairing expectation of the Epiphany, and their exceeding great joy at the appearance of the star.

The Collect is from the old Sacramentary of Gregory the Great, but is found in even older Liturgies, and has no doubt been used on this Sunday for at least sixteen hundred years by the churches of the Saints. When St. Paul beheld

the Epiphany of CHRIST on his way to Damascus, he at once recognized it as a call to a work and warfare for the glory of His Name, and cried — “ LORD, what wilt Thou have me *to do* ?” In like manner the Church recognizes the manifestation of JESUS, as laying us under the deepest obligation to devote ourselves to His service ; and so puts into our mouths a prayer for wisdom “ to perceive and know what things we *ought to do* ; and for grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same.” Let the service therefore be regarded as one peculiarly calling on us to show our gratitude for the blessings of the Gospel by a healthful missionary zeal. If we value the grace of GOD, we must extend it to the heathen who are yet unclaimed as the Lord’s inheritance. And let us particularly remember in our prayers at this holy season all true missionaries of the cross, wherever throughout the world they are bearing the sign of the world’s redemption.

The Epistle is from the great Doctor of the Gentiles himself, teaching us in answer to our prayers *the things which we ought to do*. The Holy Gospel displays the Holy Child in one of the earliest *Epiphanies* of that gracious power by which He “ spake as never man spake.” It tells us also that He “ increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with GOD and man ;” or, in other words, that as the natural sun grows brighter and brighter in our sight from the dawning to the noonday, though in itself the same all the while, so the Sun of Righteousness

was *manifested* more and more in the flesh, till “we beheld His glory—the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Second Sunday after Epiphany.



HE attentive worshipper will now be quite prepared to detect for himself the special texts of the Epiphany Season, as they occur in the Lessons. To indicate only one or two ; we have in the First Lesson the reference to a “Light of the People,” and the promise, “The Isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust.” With this may be compared the declaration (John i. 29, &c.) of the holy Baptist, when he repeats the story of the Redeemer’s Baptismal Epiphany, and again manifests him to Israel—as “the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.”

[At *Evening Prayer* our thoughts are carried by a rapid, but most intelligible transition, just as were those of the three favoured disciples from the mountain of transfiguration and glory to that of crucifixion and shame, to the consideration of the babe at Bethlehem, growing up “as a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness ;” no longer worshipped by adoring kings, but “despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” The shadows of Lent and

Passion Week are allowed for a moment to fall upon the glories of Advent and Epiphany, left in His momentary earthly exaltation we should forget the character and sufferings of Him "whose we are and whom we serve." We must work and suffer with Him, if we would also reign with Him.]

A similar lesson is given us in the Epistle, which speaks of faith and hope, but enlarges on charity, and gives the precept, "Let Love be without dissimulation." The Gospel is the manifestation of Christ by His first Miracle, one of the three principal Epiphanies. The Collect will be seen to be appropriate, as the prayer of Gentiles calling themselves the people of God, and asking for that peace which His ministers publish, and of which they also establish the Covenant as the Ministry of reconciliation.

Third Sunday after Epiphany.

THE prominent point in the Service to-day is the Holy Gospel, containing the narrative of our Lord's mercy to a Gentile, the Roman centurion, and His commendation of Gentile faith in the words—"I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel." To this He subjoins a promise of the ingathering of Gentiles from East and West and North and South, with the awful threat to rejected Israel—

“ But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness.” The Epistle is a specimen of that heavenly morality which the Gospel preached to the Romans and other Gentiles, who worshipped Brute Force, War and Fraud, Revenge and Hatred, teaching them to throw down these idols, and to enthrone Love, Joy and Peace in their stead. The Collect teaches us to look to “ the Right Hand of the LORD ” for that defence which the heathen expect from their own hands, from their bows and spears, and from their false gods.

The First Lessons, at both Prayers, are prophecies of the conversion of the Gentiles, so full that it is almost impossible to select special passages. [In the Evening, the text which may most strike us will be, perhaps, that beautiful promise to those not of the seed of Israel, who yet have by their faith and love become inheritors of Israel’s blessings : “ Also the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him and to love the Name of the LORD ” — “ even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer ! ” While in the Morning the coming in of the fulness of the Gentiles is announced in those striking words : “ Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy GOD, and for the Holy One of Israel ; for He hath glorified thee.”]

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

THE Morning Lesson, from Isaiah, declares the blessedness of the righteous in death, while it denounces the sin and shame of false religion, and the restless misery of the wicked. Its bearing on the Season seems to be in its description of heathenism, and in its call to the removal of all stumbling-blocks, that the Gospel may have free course. In contrast with the dreary and barren state of the unevangelized soul is exhibited the promise of "the High and Holy One" to dwell with "him that is of a contrite and humble spirit." [The proclamation of GOD's grace is made in all its fulness and freeness to Gentile as well as Jew: "Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him."

The Evening Lesson for this day is more than usually important, and deserves a more than common attention from those who desire rightly to observe the fasts and festivals of our Church. The prophet is commissioned to point out to GOD's people their special and characteristic sins in this matter, in that "in the day of their fast they found pleasure, and exacted all their labours." It is but too possible that we may "seek GOD daily, and delight to know His ways, as a nation that did righteous-

ness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God," and yet in all our observances of days and seasons, there may be neither love nor faith. Against this danger the prophet warns us, and in these days of argument and wrangling, of "strife and debate," we shall do well to take his warnings to heart.]

The Collect recognizes our great spiritual dangers, and appeals to God for the aid of His Spirit to support and guide the soul. The Epistle shows that the kingdom of CHRIST is not of this world, and that it obliges its subjects to be obedient to the laws of earthly rulers. The Gospel, which the Collect seems to suit more especially, displays the power of CHRIST to defend us in perils of the great deep and in all the assaults of the devil. It suits the Epiphany more especially, as displaying His power and majesty in controlling the winds and the waves. All the powers of nature obey Him, and even unclean spirits attest His divinity and supremacy and bear fearful witness to the wrath to come. Thus He is identified as the promised seed who should "destroy the works of the devil." But a striking display of the hardness and uncleanness of the human heart is afforded in the conclusion of the Gospel; for this merciful and holy JESUS, in spite of all His marvellous acts of benevolence, is entreated to depart from their coasts by certain people who find His presence an impediment to their unlawful gains. Thus the Gospel is sometimes hid when it would be mani-

fested but for the disposition of money-lovers to worship the god of this world, rather than Him who alone can give us the true riches.

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany.

WHEN we observe how full of Epiphany texts are the prophets of the Old Testament, we need not wonder that the Church calls us to dwell on them for a succession of Sundays. We must reflect that we are now fixing our thoughts on the Incarnation of the Son of GOD and the great ends for which GOD consented to this marvellous abasement. It is impossible that we should become too thoroughly acquainted with what Scripture has revealed on this great point.

When our blessed LORD began His ministry at Nazareth where He was brought up, He did so, as we were reminded last Sunday, by going into the Synagogue on the Sabbath day, taking the book of the Prophet Isaiah from the minister and reading therefrom a passage which He applied to Himself saying—"This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." It was no doubt the Lesson of the day by the Jewish calendar, and it is still the custom in Jewish Synagogues for the Rabbi to call on some of the people to assist in reading the Lessons—a privilege for which they even pay a

fee. The First Morning Lesson to-day is taken from this very Prophet Isaiah whose words the holy JESUS Himself once read as a Lesson and then preached upon. Reflect on this as the Minister of CHRIST goes on to do as his Master did, and your heart will burn within you. The voice of CHRIST that day has never ceased: by His Ministers He prolongs that reading and preaching which He Himself instituted at Nazareth.

[The Lessons of this day's service still give the prophet's account of the unspeakable blessings of the Gospel.

In the Morning Lesson, observe the promise, "So shall they fear the LORD from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun." This promise of the spread of the Gospel is followed by one still more striking. The great and critical periods of the Church, when iniquity has so abounded as to threaten her extinction, have ever been the occasion for signal deliverances: and thus the promise has been fulfilled: "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him." Thus are all Christians encouraged and enabled to fight against the power of the enemy, and to manifest CHRIST in their own persons and lives. Here is an Epiphany we can all ensure to CHRIST: "Let your light shine before men;" thus will they, through us, "glorify our FATHER which is in heaven."]

We should observe, that, after the addition of the Gentiles to Israel, the people of GOD are no more called Israelites but Christians : this promise was therefore fulfilled, in part, when the LORD named His household His CHURCH (St. Matt. xvi. 18), and when the disciples were first called CHRISTIANS at Antioch. This great idea of a Church—denationalized and made to embrace all mankind, finds its further fulfilment in the Creed—where the new name is adopted with an apostolic prefix—"The HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH." In the Collect for the day we have the same idea in the petition, "Keep Thy *Church and Household* continually in Thy true religion."

The Epistle reverts to the subject of charity, and continues the exposition of that Morality by which the Gospel has supplanted the "philosophical virtues," which were all that "the world by wisdom" ever knew. In the Gospel we observe the conflict of the Gospel with the powers of darkness. CHRIST was "manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil ;" but the devil resists, and the victory is not to be complete till the end of the world. Meantime, the existence of any wheat in the field of the world is a manifestation of the kingdom of heaven, even though the tares are growing with it.

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany.

THE grand Epiphany, which is yet future, is brought into view to-day as a close to this solemn Season. It is the Epiphany of the Son of GOD in the clouds of Heaven, when men will no longer be able to close their eyes to the glory of His power and Godhead. Coincident with this will be the “manifestation of the Sons of GOD,” whom He, as their elder brother, condescends to call His brethren. They will be part of His glory; the trophies of His victory; the evidences of His ability to “destroy the works of the devil,” and to crown all by destroying Satan himself, casting him for ever into the place prepared for him and his angels. The tares he planted and all who refused to be Sons of GOD must perish with Satan. This, therefore, is all summed up in the Collect for this day. The connection of the Gospel with the Collect is evident enough, as it is an overwhelming prediction by CHRIST Himself of His second coming. This service, when crowded out of its place by the approach of Lent, is taken up by a provision of the rubric, just before the season of Advent at the close of the Christian year: and this Gospel makes it as strikingly appropriate to that season as it is to this. The Epistle connects with the words of the Collect in its opening ejaculation — “Behold! what manner of love the Father hath bestowed

upon us, that we should be called *the Sons of God*:" and also, in its concluding words—"For this purpose the Son of GOD was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."

In the Morning Lesson, from Isaiah, we have the passage—"I am sought of them that asked not for Me, I am found of them that sought Me not." Now, St. Paul (Romans x. 20) tells us that Isaiah was "very bold" in thus telling the Hebrews that the Gentiles were to be their brethren in the true Israel of GOD. His Greek translation, and again our English rendering of his quotation, are a little nearer the idea of the Epiphany than the original as here given—"I was *made manifest* to them that asked not after Me." Such is our New Testament version.

At Evening Prayer, observe among the manifold promises of the spirit of prophecy that extraordinary one of a Christian Priesthood—"I will also take of *them* (the Gentiles) for Priests and for Levites, saith the LORD." Now even a Jew was inadmissible to the Priesthood unless he belonged to the tribe of Levi and was of the Sons of Aaron. Here then was a prediction of a new succession of Apostolic Priests and Levites; and we see the fulfilment in every diocese, which is a complete Church, having those who correspond to High Priest, Priests, and Levites, now called Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.* Compare with this

* This analogy, of course, requires considerable modification.—ED.

promise the third Chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, which consists mainly in a rebuke of the Jewish Christians for not seeing this great principle, that "GOD is able to raise up children unto Abraham" from those not naturally of his seed; and that the test of a true Israelite, since CHRIST came, is the *faith* of Abraham, and not his blood. Besides, CHRIST is the true seed of Abraham, to Whom all the promises are made; and all who are grafted into Him by faith, and by baptism, (the anti-type of circumcision,) are thus made true Israelites. So then—"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all ONE in CHRIST JESUS; and if ye be CHRIST's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." On this glorious exposition the teaching of the Epiphany Season may rest. It explains our right to use the Old Testament Scriptures, and shows that we are built on the foundation of prophets as well as of Apostles, JESUS CHRIST Himself being the Chief Corner-stone.

Septuagesima.



THE Church now enters the penumbra of her Lenten Eclipse; and all her services are shadowed with the sombre hue of her approaching season of humiliation. The ancient name of this Sunday implies that it is

—so to speak—Seventy days to the feast of the Resurrection ; next Sunday it will, in round numbers, be Sixty days ; then Fifty days ; and then, when Lent is fairly begun, the first Sunday is called Quadragesima—as being only fix weeks, or about forty days to the Great Feast. Thus we have turned our back upon dear old Christmas, and the group of holidays that hand-in-hand seemed fairly to dance around it ; and setting our faces towards the more sober but not less glorious light of Easter, we begin to number the days of preparation, which if duly observed will fit us to keep the Passover as the Apostle commands, “ Not with the old leaven . . . but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

Nor is the way in which the Church counts these days to be regarded as teaching nothing. It is the way of the world to reckon advancing time by addition ; but the Church now gives us Seventy days, and gently hints to us how life is going, as she bids us daily to *subtract* one—that so “ we may number our days and apply our hearts unto wisdom.” Thus, while she would have us persevere through Lent, growing more and more desirous of the sunrise of Easter, and rejoicing to see the appointed days diminish as that day draws near, she would also teach us to pass the few and evil days of our sojourning in this life, feeling every day that we have one day less to live, keeping the Resurrection always in view, and

singing with the Psalmist, "When I awake up in Thy likeness I shall be satisfied."

The ancient Introit for Septuagesima Sunday, is Psalm the 23rd, "The Lord is my Shepherd." It is an appropriate choice; for, as Dr. Hammond has remarked, there is a pathetic strain in this Psalm which well comports with what the day brings into view. The Lenten Season is especially the time when the Church would have her children learn how to live. Life itself should be a Lent—a term of holy discipline—with a Great Easter in constant view. And as even in Lent come Sundays, which are to be kept as feasts; so in Life days of festivity must be in such proportion as to remind us that restraint and watchfulness and penitence are the business, and mirth only the refreshment, of our pilgrimage. The Introit therefore sings the joys of the Christian life, as consisting in following the Good Shepherd whithersoever He goeth; and looking with confidence to death, as brightened by the promise of the supporting rod and staff of Him, who, as Easter will remind us, has Himself gone through the dark valley, and will not desert the sheep of His pasture when He brings them also to its shades. There is something sweet, too, in the use of this Psalm, which tells of green meads and waters of comfort at the very time when the world regards the Church as about to be fed with the bread of affliction and the drink of tears. And while the way

of the Church is set forth in this Psalm as the true way of following the Saviour, its concluding verse gives utterance to a holy purpose of ensuring GOD's favour, by *dwelling in the house of the Lord for ever.*

The Collect which is the ancient one for this day throughout Western Christendom, is penitential and deprecatory in its character, and seems to have reference to the many prayers which the people of GOD throughout the world are now about to offer up for individual blessings, and for the good estate of the Catholic Church.

The Epistle is from the Great Preacher of Faith, St. Paul, and shows what kind of faith he recommends; declaring that even he, whose faith removed so many mountains, nevertheless found works of discipline absolutely necessary, lest he should be a castaway. Thus, though he has taught us that *bodily exercise* by itself profiteth as little as *faith* without love; he shows us, on the other hand, that the body must be kept under and brought into subjection, in the ways which he elsewhere recommends, by *fasting often*, and *watching* unto prayer. To the same purpose is the Holy Gospel, which repeats the significant warning, "Many be called but few chosen."

[And while in the Gospel we are distinctly taught that there is no place for idlers or loiterers in the LORD's vineyard, our attention is being called away from the manner in which CHRIST came

into the world to the sin on our part which made His coming necessary. It is probably for this purpose that the Church has selected for our reading and contemplation at this time the early history of man in the Book of Genesis. There we are taught from the beginning how all things came forth from the hand of the Maker very good. Nor was man an exception to this goodness and perfectness. He too was made free from sin, and not subject to death. But soon by man came sin, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all, because the first Adam was, as it were, the root of the human race. Henceforth the Sundays before Lent, and those in Lent, are occupied with a recitation of the early history of man:—a history full even in the best cases of sin and sorrow and suffering and death. We shall not need to enter specially into these separate Lessons, because their design is in the main the same. They all tell the same tale, the fall of man, and the need and hope of a Redeemer. They all lead us step by step along that path of the world's history, the end of which was the birth of CHRIST. They separate first one family and then another from the various households which they bring before us, to be the repositories of GOD's promises, and the cradle of the world's hopes. If we are preparing to be worthy spectators of the death of CHRIST for our sins, we shall not be unmoved readers and hearers of those chapters from the Book of Genesis in which death

and life, despair and hope, corruption and immortality appear to be growing day by day. Let us read the world's early history, the sad story of the Fall and all its dreary consequences, by the light of that Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Above all, let us strive to feel, while reading of the sins of the patriarchs of old times, that we and they are bound together not only by the ties of a common corrupt nature, but also by the great bond of redemption, by a common SAVIOUR. So shall these Sundays of preparation, and the period of self-denial and examination which are to follow, prepare us for a right and profitable view of the Cross, the Resurrection, and the Triumph of CHRIST for us.]

*Sexagesima.**

WENT draws near: and we—are we getting ready to use it aright? Now is the time for good resolves as to what acts of self-denial we shall endeavour to practise by the help of the LORD.

* [The Church of England has selected nearly the whole of her First Lessons, from Septuagesima to Easter, from Genesis. The purpose and object of this have already been pointed out in general, and do not seem to require any special comment and illustration. The Editor has preferred, therefore, during the remainder of these Sundays

For Sexagesima the Psalm *Domini est terra* (24th) is the old Introit ; in which there seems but little reference to the day or season ; save as it describes “ the generation of them that seek thy face, oh Jacob.” It may be considered as setting before us the pattern to which we must conform ourselves by the discipline of Lent.

The Collect, which comes from the ancient Sacramentaries, exhibits the Scriptural and primitive doctrine concerning works of discipline and mortification ; declaring that “ we put not our trust in anything that we do.” Thus, though we should be able at this season to say “ I fast twice a week” like the Pharisee, we rather smite upon our breasts and say “ God be merciful to me a sinner” like the publican, who while he did this left not the other undone. The Epistle shows how St. Paul kept his body under and brought it into subjection. His stripes and imprisonments, his perils by land and sea, his “ deaths oft” were not enough ; he added thereunto *vigils often* and *fastings often*. Are we in no danger of being castaways, who though in *feasts often* scarcely *fast* even on Ash-Wednesday, and cannot “ watch one hour !”

to call the attention of members of his own Church (who are supposed to secure at this season times for more than usual meditation and prayer) to certain chapters selected by the sister Church of America for this season, which have been chosen with peculiar fitness, and the remarks upon which in the text are well worthy of attention.]

Or are these mortifications in such an example as St. Paul, and is this record thereof by the Holy Ghost designed to teach us nothing?

By the Gospel we are taught to take heed how we hear. Our LORD Himself gives the parable and adds the interpretation thereof. His Church exhorts men to ask themselves how they are accustomed to hear the Gospel; and if their hearts are rocky or stony or thorny or like the baked and beaten way,—to “break up the fallow ground, for it is time to seek the LORD.” Alas, how many seeing see not, and hearing do not understand the teachings of the Word, or the method by which it has pleased GOD to distribute every portion thereof in due season!

Of the sentences that begin the Daily Prayer, the most appropriate to the Season are those which invite to penitence, rather than those which are strictly penitential and hence better adapted to Lent than to its preparatory Season. The Sentence, “When the wicked man”—and that from St. John, “If we say that we have no sin,” will be found in keeping with the services of the day.

The thoughtful Christian is referred for private study to Jer. xxxv, where, by the example of the ancient Rechabites, we are called to deny ourselves for the sake of our Heavenly Father, as faithfully as they did the will of their earthly parent. It is an interesting narrative, and a most forcible expostulation with the people of GOD, who often


are unwilling, even for the few weeks of Lent, to practise as much self-control as the Rechabites did with respect to the precepts of their fathers. The service refers to other duties however than "bodily exercise," and reproaches us with our general unfaithfulness to our Father in Heaven.

To this may be added in the Morning meditation one of the most beautiful portions of St. Luke's Gospel (Luke vii), concluding with the touching story of her who "loved much, because much forgiven." Its appropriateness to a penitential season will be felt as well as perceived, by all who have ears to hear.

For evening study we may read from the Old Testament the story of Jehoiakim burning the roll. (Jer. xxxvi.) To get rid of the fearful warnings of GOD, many like Jehoiakim pretend a contempt for His word, and endeavour in every way to hide their real fears by an outward indifference to its threats and promises. Jehoiakim cut the Word of GOD into shreds with his penknife and threw it into the fire. The SPIRIT of GOD immediately dictated a new roll, containing all that was written in the former, "and there were added besides them *many like words*." Those who stop their ears to the message of GOD's rebuke only ensure to themselves the greater judgment. From the New Testament we may read the second chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is full of encouragement to newness of life, for those who

understand the true nature of their union with CHRIST by communion with His living Church. In time past we were "Gentiles—without CHRIST, —strangers from the Covenant, having no hope, and without GOD in the world. But now in CHRIST JESUS we who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of CHRIST." Thus of Jews and Gentiles is made one Holy Catholic Church, reared on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, JESUS CHRIST Himself being the Chief Corner-stone ; and this is the Communion of Saints, all members of this spiritual building having access by one SPIRIT unto the Father. What an exhibition is this of our glorious privileges as members of that ancient communion in which we are declared to be fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the household of GOD ! This then being our calling, let us be holy even as He that hath called us is holy ; endeavouring to keep the unity of the SPIRIT in the bond of peace. Let us pray moreover for the restoration of that outward and visible sign of Catholic Unity which has been so much impaired, though the inward invisible grace thereof like the Church itself is impregnable to the very Gates of Hell.

Quinquagesima.

HE days of bodily exercise are at hand ; therefore in the Service for the day we are reminded of the absolute nothingness both of faith and works without that love which is the fulfilling of the Law. “ I will wash my hands in innocency, oh Lord, and so will I go to thine altar ; ” such is the sweet language of the Introit for this Sunday, which is the Psalm, *Be thou my judge, oh Lord* ; the 26th Psalm of David. It is partly penitential—partly jubilant. And as in Lent we purpose to be more frequent than ever in our attendance on the Sanctuary, it gives expression to this pious resolve, in the words —“ Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thine honour dwelleth.” The Collect is modern as to its form, but in substance it is the Word of GOD Himself, being composed out of Scripture so late as the year 1549. All will agree that it is very beautiful, and surely the Catholic spirit survived in those who could mould a Collect so well worthy of standing side by side with the ancient ones ! The Epistle is the rich mine from which the Collect was brought out. If the Collect requires any proof, you have it in the Epistle ; if the Epistle needs any comment, you have it in the Collect. The Holy Gospel is a foreshadowing of the crucifixion ; and is designed

to affect us, as it did the Apostles themselves, when "JESUS took unto Him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished." Moreover it warns us, that "JESUS of Nazareth passeth by." The Season of Grace is coming and going. Now is the time to cry, with the blind man, "JESUS Thou Son of David, have mercy on me."

The first Chapter of Lamentations will powerfully dispose to humiliation and fasting all those who realize the awful changes which have reduced the Catholic Church to her present forlorn and divided state. "How is she become a widow—she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces . . . She weepeth sore in the night and her tears are on her cheeks. . . . All her friends have dealt treacherously with her; they are become her enemies. The ways of Zion do mourn, because *none come to her solemn feasts*; all her gates are desolate, *her priests sigh . . . Her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper*, for the Lord hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions." This is language that well becomes us in the present state of the Church, and it should prepare us for the day of sackcloth and ashes. Let us reflect that as the Seven Churches in the Apocalypse were still Churches and enjoyed CHRIST's presence, although some of them

were grossly corrupt, so now every branch of the ancient Vine, whether Greek or Coptic or Roman or German or Gallican, is to be prayed for and hoped for, till CHRIST Himself has cut it off and cast it away. We have a duty to purify ourselves and others if we can ; but we are not permitted to judge others, or to attempt to hasten the judgment which GOD forbears to execute. From the New Testament we may select the sixth Chapter of St. Mark, calling our solemn attention to our own state, when it reminds us of those at whom the Saviour “ marvelled because of their unbelief ; ” and by the example of St. John Baptist bids us prepare ourselves for patient suffering, as good soldiers of CHRIST. In the evening we may profitably read from the same prophet the third Chapter of Lamentations, and in the New Testament we may continue the Epistle to the Ephesians, which concludes with one of the sublimest doxologies in the writings of St. Paul. “ Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall ! ” And again—“ It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed—because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning—great is thy faithfulness ! ” Who can read—who can hear such Scriptures, without emotion, contrition, and that “ charity without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before GOD ! ”

Ash-Wednesday.

HE Season of Lent begins to-day. The institution of Lent itself seems to have been primitive, if not divine. CHRIST bids us fast; the Church only tells us when to fast, seeing there must be a time for everything. Now then as says the Collect let us "worthily lament our sins:" and as says the Epistle "Let the bridegroom go forth out of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet; let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, *Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach.*" The Holy Gospel sets before us our Saviour's rule of fasting and alms-deeds, and exhibits "the fast which He has chosen." The Introit may be the Psalm (6th), "Oh Lord, rebuke me not in thine indignation."

[The Daily Prayer may well commence with "Rend your hearts, and not your garments:" as teaching us the need of a repentance not feigned but from the heart. The proper Psalms appointed for both Morning and Evening Service are calculated to draw our attention forcibly to the true nature of sin, and to encourage in us, as well as to supply us with words for, a sincere and real repentance. The most penitential and appropriate of all the Psalms is reserved for the Communion

Service, which, notwithstanding all the objections which have been made to it, is still used on this day, and still commends itself to the approval of every English Churchman. The mixture of stern rebuke implied in the recitation of God's curses against impenitent sinners, with the anxious and affectionate entreaties with which the Church, in God's name, pleads with His children, is eminently calculated to rouse in our hearts a fear of sin, and a longing desire to return to our Father in heaven. We are led on to aspirations after God's love by the yearning love with which He invites us and urges us to accept His gracious invitation. We begin to believe in spite of the rebukes of conscience and the terrors of the Law, that "though our sins be as red as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." And after having listened with fear and trembling, as guilty sinners, to the awful denunciations with which the service begins, we are gradually prepared before its close to accept with heartfelt thankfulness the sure and certain hope held out to us, that "CHRIST will deliver us from the curse of the law."]

In ancient times the Church on this day put offenders to open rebuke; and while discipline is less active, let each lay God's comminations sincerely to heart, and judge himself thereby. And as commonly on this day the penitent and humble-minded alone are found at Church, a more profitable opportunity for the publication of Ec-

clestial censures seems afforded by this day, than by the days in which there are more present than would be likely to receive the same in the spirit enjoined by the Apostle. (Galatians vi. 1.)

The Collects and Supplications that follow the Litany are forms of humiliation before God, which to the truly contrite will be as the opening of the flood-gates of the soul. And how sublime the thought, that the holy Church in many lands and tongues, in similar if not identical language, is pouring out the heart before God with us on this solemn day !

Of the Lessons we need not speak, as they are obviously well-selected, and cannot fail to be understood. But earnestly we may entreat the faithful to keep the fast and to keep it unto the LORD. Never was there greater need than in this day of ours, and in this land where Christians do not love one another as they ought.

First Sunday in Lent.



OUR blessed LORD fasted forty days without intermission ; but while we endeavour to follow His holy example, every seventh day is a blessed feast, recurring like wells in the desert of Baca, and like pools filled with water, lest we should faint by the way. Sunday is always a feast commemorative of the

Refurrection, and the Sundays *in* Lent are not days *of* Lent, though they partake of the solemn and disciplinary character of the Season. Let us go then from Sunday to Sunday, as from strength to strength, halting on the first day of the week like travellers at a green spot in the wilderness, and then setting forward anew with refreshed and stimulated aspirations after that heavenly Canaan towards which we are faring.

The old Introit for the day is the Psalm *Beati quorum* (32nd) which is one of the Seven Penitentials. In the Collect we implore the LORD for grace to keep the fast, with due bodily exercise, for the proper spiritual ends. To this let all say Amen, with purpose of heart to make the effort it implies. Nor let any suppose themselves morally free to fast or to disregard the precept, as a thing indifferent. It is the call of GOD, and he that without good reason refuses to hear the trumpet which is blown in Sion and to sanctify the fast, should fear lest he be visited with judgment for his neglect. Perhaps "many are weak and sickly among us" and fast in spite of their wills, because they do not voluntarily fast for their souls' good. They do not bring themselves down in fear, and so GOD brings them down in judgment and in mercy. When the ancient people of GOD refused to let their lands lie fallow on the seventh year,—He carried them into captivity, till the time was fully made up, that the land might enjoy its Sabbaths. Per-

haps in the same way now, by sickness and disease, He makes the neglectors of their duty in Lent humble themselves unwillingly, and so keep the Church's fast. We speak not of those without her pale: we "warn the unruly" who boast themselves her sons.

In the Epistle we are reminded of the sufferings of others for our sake; and the example of Apostles, approving themselves by *labours*, by *watchings* and by *fastings*, is conjoined with that of their Divine LORD and SAVIOUR, which follows in the Holy Gospel. This latter exhibits the Man of Sorrows in that "fasting and temptation" by which we supplicate His mercy in the Litany. It tells us how He was tempted in all points like as we are: assailed by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life—the flesh, the world, and the devil—yet without sin. It teaches us how He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and reminds us of the sword of the Spirit, wherewith He has shown us how to resist the devil and to make him flee from us. He wrestled with the devil, not in the power of His Godhead, but with the weapon which is given to man. He foiled the tempter with the Word of God. His word and shield alike were simply,—*It is written.*

Christian, in the holy tide of Lent, the SPIRIT leadeth thee away from the world into a wilderness, where thou art bidden for a while to exercise

thyself in that valiant fight which thou vowedst at the font. Look then unto JESUS; and in His might and in His manner wrestle mightily and prevail. Learn, while thou fastest, that "man shall not live by bread alone:" that the promise of God to save thee must not encourage thee to presume; and that the anxious pursuit of worldly objects in this life is the *worship of the Devil*! Search the Holy Scriptures that thou mayest have an answer to the tempter; and be warned of the perversions of Scripture by which Satan and his ministers beguile and deceive them that are "unlearned and unstable." So shalt thou be more than conqueror through Him that loveth us; and "as angels came and ministered to Him," so after thy fight, alike of Lent and life, thou shalt find thyself refreshed by the service of those "who are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation."

If there be those in the Church, who deem their baptism and their Catholic privileges sufficient to save them, without that holiness, which alone can qualify them to "see the Lord," let them learn from the study of the seventh Chapter of Jeremiah how fearful is their delusion. The Jews who had among them "the temple of the Lord," supposed this to be a sufficient safe-guard. If any one threatened them with a righteous retribution—they were ready with the answer, that God could never allow His own Holy Place to be defiled, or His Holy

Mountain to be made a defolation. They pointed to the great stones, and the towering pinnacles of the House of God, and said "the temple of the Lord are these." And this was true: and "if ye thoroughly amend your ways, and your doings" said the Lord, "then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers for ever and ever." But, on the other hand, said the Lord,—suppose not that this will save you if ye go on in sin and pretend that ye cannot help it. My Holy Ark and my Tabernacle were once in Shiloh as they are now on Mount Zion; yet for the sins of Eli and his sons, and for the wickedness of the people, the Philistines were allowed to destroy for ever that tabernacle, and to take captive the ark itself. Remember this, and be sure that though the temple of the Lord be among you, it shall not save you except ye repent. Such was the warning; but they regarded not. And judgment came; and the temple was destroyed; and "from the streets of Jerusalem ceased the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, and the land was desolate."

The Church now bids her children consider these solemn admonitions; and to remember that "baptism doth now save us," but not unless we preserve unto the end, when the Bridegroom cometh, that "answer of a good conscience," which is the marriage garment required. Doubtless the temple of God is among us; and we are

true inhabitants of the city of God. But so much the more does GOD require of us to be indeed the salt of the Earth and the light of the world. If we lose our favour of holiness—and bury our candle under a bushel—the LORD will come quickly and take away our candlestick out of its place ; and the wicked and slothful servant will be the more severely punished for wearing the livery of a Master whom he has disobeyed and whose cause he has disgraced.

As the Lenten Ember-week begins this day, we may well occupy ourselves with the history of the call and commission of the twelve apostles,* and with the sermon of our blessed LORD on that occasion, showing the duties, the responsibilities, and the dignity of those who are made His messengers to men. It concludes with the solemn assurance, “ He that receiveth you, receiveth Me ; and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me.” And the verse with which it commences, follows immediately the precept, “ Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest.” As Ember-week is an institution of the Church designed to secure the observance of this command, the Lesson is well chosen as setting forth the origin of that ministry which our own Apostles have received from the original twelve.

* Matt. x.

Again in our Evening meditation we may extract from Jeremiah, (ch. ix.) a fierce rebuke and call to penitence. "Shall not I visit . . . for these things saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" As churchmen and patriots we should hear these things with lowliness and fear. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches." The prophet tells us in what alone we should dare to glory.

A second passage appropriate to Ember-week may be taken from the continuation of the Epistle to the Ephesians, (Eph. iv.) as setting forth the "one LORD, one faith, one baptism," which define the Catholic Church: and the Apostles, pastors and teachers whom CHRIST has set therein for the work of the ministry and for the edifying of His Body. It concludes with an exhortation to holiness and the enumeration of many particulars in which we are tempted to offend; and reminds us that though we have been sealed in baptism unto the day of redemption by the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, there is a possibility and danger of grieving Him and driving Him for ever away.

Ember-week in Lent.

BEFORE our LORD ordained the twelve
 He passed the night in prayer ; and the
 holy Apostles before they sent forth
 Barnabas and Saul, fasted and prayed.

This week the Church commands us to do the same, and has provided two most comprehensive prayers “ for those who are to be admitted into Holy Orders,” which it is our duty, in the closet, at the family altar, and in the house of GOD, fervently to employ in their behalf.

Let these prayers be uttered in faith and earnest zeal for the glory of GOD, and the salvation of men ; and on the Ember-days (Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday) let all who love the Church keep the fast together. Throughout the world it is observed by many ; but in our own Church by, alas, too few ! He who faithfully keeps the Ember Seasons will have done more for the Church in his life-time, than a thousand satirists of the Clergy, or an army of censorious declaimers setting forth their own ideas of what the ministry should be. Indeed he has no right to find fault with his spiritual pastors, who has never helped them with the offices which the Church, knowing their peculiar dangers, has provided and enjoined for their assistance and support. How often does the Apostle Paul crave the like benefit from those to whom he ministered ;

and surely the "earthen vessels" which bear the treasure of the Gospel now are as much in need of the prayers of their brethren as he was.

Let the Ember fasts be generalized also, and let prayers be offered for all Bishops, Priests, and Deacons in Christendom, and chiefly for those to whom we are nearest allied.—"Pray ye also the LORD of the harvest, to send forth labourers into His harvest." Pray for pious and lowly deacons, purchasing to themselves a good degree by St. Stephen's fervour and St. Philip's perseverance. Pray for priests rightly dividing the Word of GOD; bearing with clean hands the vessels of the LORD; faithfully dispensing His holy Sacraments; continuing instant in prayer; and rejoicing to suffer shame for JESUS' name. And pray for holy bishops, bringing to their work maturity of years, soundness of doctrine, boldness in the faith, a good report of all men and of the truth itself: dignity and humility combined; purity, and zeal, and wisdom united; and all those excellent qualities which will enable others, without mocking GOD, to present them for Consecration as "godly and well-learned men."

Second Sunday in Lent.

THIS was no common Sunday in old times. In the days of St. Augustine, those who expected to be baptized at Easter were obliged to give in their names by this day, and were called no longer Catechumens, but Competentes or *Co-Seekers* of Regeneration. The rest of Lent they passed as “valiant tamers of the body.” Very suitable to such, as an Introit for this day, is the famous Psalm (cxxx.) *De profundis*, containing the passage, “I look for the Lord; *my soul doth wait for Him*; in His word is my trust.” The Collect, which is from the Liturgy of St. Ambrose, is no doubt the same to which Augustine with his son and his friend Alypius responded *Amen*, when they knelt in the Church at Milan on this day to be catechized, as seekers of what he calls “the sacrament of that Fountain.” In that interval of holy preparation, in which these seekers had reason to fear that their experiences might be those of their Divine Master, when He fasted in the wilderness, it was natural to pray “to be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul.”

In the Epistle, those “evil thoughts which most assault and hurt the soul,” are pointed out in the Apostle’s exhortation to purity and to the sancti-

fication of the body, in honour of Him who hath called us to Holiness. The *lusts of the flesh* are peculiarly therefore the subject of rebuke this day ; and the Bride of CHRIST bids us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness that she may present us to her LORD without spot or blemish. In the Holy Gospel we are encouraged to "continue instant in prayer ;" and assured by the example of the poor woman of Canaan, that though for a time He may hide His face and "make as though He hear us not,"—He will not cast off for ever those who cry after Him and who seek earnestly to be healed of their plague of sin.

In the Lessons appointed by the American Church from Ezekiel we may note much that is appropriate to this day. In the fourteenth chapter we may understand the holy prophet as showing us the reason of the unsatisfactoriness of many of our attempts to serve GOD, and the cause of our unanswered prayers and un comforted confessions. The LORD declares that He will not be inquired of by those who appear before Him but keep the idols of their heart as the real objects of their love and worship. Let us search and look therefore whether we keep such idols ; "for the LORD our GOD is a jealous GOD." In the eighteenth chapter the prophet earnestly reasons with us, showing the justice of GOD's requirements and dealings, and fully explaining in what sense GOD does *not* "visit the sins of the fathers upon the

children." At the same time he presents us, in the language of GOD Himself, with one of the most tender and encouraging calls to repentance which the Old Testament contains ; and concludes with that solemn assurance of mingled mercy and justice, " I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth." It is mercy because it exhibits the sorrow with which GOD will pronounce the sentence *Depart* ; it is judgment because it implies that in spite of that sorrow some shall not escape the second death.

We may select for our evening thoughts the fifth Chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians as in excellent harmony with the Epistle for the day, reproofing " evil communications" as well as shameful deeds. In contrast with the sinful habits which the Apostle reproves, he places in this same chapter the " great Mystery" of Marriage, as so pure and blessed in the sight of GOD as to be a mystic symbol of CHRIST and the CHURCH. Nor must we overlook the little quotation which the Lesson appears to contain from an ancient hymn of the Primitive Church ; for such it seems to have been, being in perfect metre in the original and rhythmical even in our rendering :—

" Awake thou that sleepest :
And arise from the Dead,
And CHRIST shall give thee light."

Third Sunday in Lent.

IN our private readings from the Old Testament Ezekiel may still remain our prophet. We may read with advantage the twentieth chapter, in which he reproaches the Israel of GOD for the idols that are set up in the heart. By the history of GOD's dealings with the Hebrews, the Christian Church is warned also, to be in awe of His righteous judgment ; and the guilty habit of misinterpreting the Word of GOD is strongly rebuked, especially that species of profaneness which puts by the threatenings of the LORD as mere figures of speech. "The flaming flame shall not be quenched," says the prophet,—yet he adds, "Ah, LORD GOD, they say of me, doth he not speak parables?"

From the Gospels we may profitably select and meditate upon the ninth Chapter of St. Mark, where the Evangelist sets before us our SAVIOUR in the Glory of His Transfiguration. In this sublime Manifestation of the SON of GOD the three disciples who were to behold Him in His "agony and bloody sweat," were permitted to gaze upon the unveiled brightness and express image of the FATHER in the same man CHRIST JESUS ; and to see Moses and Elias—the Law and the Prophets—summoned from the Place of the Departed to cry

Hear ye Him! As we are so soon to stand on Calvary and behold the Son of Man in His humiliation; we are in like manner by the reading of this chapter prepared to understand the true character of Him who must suffer such things. The story of the demoniac boy, and CHRIST's mercy to him in delivering him from his spiritual enemies will be found to be in strict keeping with the Collect and Gospel; and the honour which the LORD puts on "prayer and fasting" in the conclusion of the narrative, beautifully harmonizes the somewhat triumphant character of the Lesson with the season of Lent.

Our evening reading may be made to conclude the noble Epistle to the Ephesians, with an exposition of the several duties of "all sorts and conditions of men." Such a recital furnishes the catechumen with a view of the panoply in the might of which he is to swear a life-long fight beneath CHRIST's banner against His spiritual foes. Let those who have already put on the harness make new resolutions of wearing it well, until they shall be ready to be offered, and until they can say with the Apostle "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith."

The Service Proper is the same as that which the Latin Missal still retains from the earliest Liturgies. The common idea of the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, appears to be that of our spiritual dangers from Satan, and our spiritual suf-

ficiency in CHRIST. By “the Right hand of God’s Majesty” the Fathers were wont to understand a name of our SAVIOUR: and thus in the Collect GOD is invoked to save us from our enemies by “the Man of His Right-hand”—CHRIST JESUS. So also in the Epistle while we are warned to have no fellowship with those unfruitful works of darkness, which as children of the Day we have renounced, the promise is that CHRIST shall give light to those who turn from dead works to serve the Living GOD. The Holy Gospel in like manner exhibits the Right Hand of God’s Majesty casting out devils *by the finger of God*; in which expression, perhaps we may be taught to recognize a name of the HOLY GHOST, proceeding from the FATHER and the SON. So in the *Veni Creator*, the Church chants to the glory of the SPIRIT,

“In faithful hearts Thou writ’st Thy law,
The finger of God’s hand.”

The Gospel moreover warns us of the necessity of decision in our Christian profession, and of the horrible end of apostates; while for our encouragement it concludes with a beatification, in which the Son of Mary includes *all* who “hear His word and *keep it*,” even to a degree which some might have regarded as peculiar to the Blessed Virgin His Mother.

And for an Introit as the Priest goes up to the

Altar, to begin so comfortable a service, the whole congregation of Christians, performing their part as a "royal priesthood," may well accompany him with these aspirations from the forty-third Psalm—
 "Oh send out Thy light and Thy truth, that they may lead me and bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy dwelling; and that I may go unto the Altar of GOD, even unto the GOD of my joy and gladness."

Fourth Sunday in Lent.

WE have reached Mid-lent: and now we turn to the second part of its great design, and consider "CHRIST our Passover," as we have heretofore learned that Satan is our task-master, and the world our Egypt, in the Temptation and Fasting of CHRIST. To-day, we may consider ourselves as presented with CHRIST as our Prophet—next Sunday with CHRIST our Priest—and then on Palm Sunday, with CHRIST our King. Further, this Sunday is sometimes called the Sunday of Refection from its Gospel. It has less than usual of the austere character of the Sundays in Lent, and was designed to have for its object the encouragement of catechumens and penitents. To this end the Epistle is chosen to exhibit the glorious freedom of the Sons of GOD; while the Holy Gospel relates the miracle at Capernaum, which sets forth

our compassionate SAVIOUR, as the feeder alike of the souls and bodies of all who follow Him. As this portion of Scripture is twice used as a Gospel, that is to say here and on the 25th Sunday after Trinity; and as the similar miracle of the seven loaves is made the Gospel for the 7th Sunday after Trinity, it is but reasonable to suppose that the Church wishes the same transaction to be seen in all its bearings. This miracle then may be well taken in at least two senses. At a future time we may consider it as a proof of the mercy and creative power of our Divine LORD, and so a proof of His Godhead. In the present instance we should also consider the same exercise of omnipotence with reference to its typical signification, as designed to illustrate the Institution of the Christian Passover, and of the Holy Eucharist which we are soon to celebrate. "Therefore," to quote St. Augustine, "as we have heard how great this miracle is—let us likewise discover how profound! Let us not alone be charmed with its surface; let us also sound its depths! For what we so much admire without, contains something within."

The Fathers have seen much that is mystical in all parts of the parable. "Twelve baskets," says one, "remained over and above, that each Apostle, bearing a basket on his shoulder, might recognize the ineffable wonder of the miracle." In the division of the company into different portions,

each served by an Apostle, they see a lively image of the Catholic Church, which is one blessed company in which all partake of that One Bread which the Apostles received from CHRIST and have delivered to us.

And as both Epistle and Gospel exhibit the comfortable promises of the LORD, the Collect implores Him to vouchsafe to us relief in spite of our unworthiness. While all who are lifting up their eyes and hungering for the Easter feast to which we now draw near will find this prayer appropriate ; it will be seen at once how suitable it is to those especially, who are preparing for baptism at Easter ; or to lapsers and others looking to restoration to the privileges of full Communion, which used to be a public solemnity on Maunday-Thursdlay.

The 46th Psalm (*Deus noster refugium*) may well be selected, if one be used, for the Introit, as a blessed expression of confidence and trust which fully harmonizes with the refreshing services of the day.

The sixth Chapter from the Prophet Micah may be this day read as "profitable" alike "for reproof and instruction in righteousness:" inasmuch as it reproaches those who have ungratefully forgotten their obligations to the LORD, and teaches the acceptable service which He requires of those who seek Him.

To this we may add for our spiritual food the

third Chapter of Habakkuk, that sublime description of a Manifestation of JEHOVAH, commonly called the Theophany. The Transfiguration of our blessed SAVIOUR, which was one of our readings last Sunday, should be compared with this; and so we shall the better understand that JESUS is indeed "the brightness of the FATHER's glory, and the express image of His Person." The concluding verses express the sure trust of the Christian in the strength of his salvation, and his consequent independence of outward prosperity or woe.

In reading the nineteenth Chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, we may anticipate Palm Sunday, and be reminded thus early of the way in which the Lamb of God was led to the slaughter; as also of the awful retribution which came upon Jerusalem for that consummation of the sins of its people.

The Fifth Sunday in Lent, or Passion Sunday.

WHILE the Israelite in the desert was dying of the plague, it was natural that he should forget everything but his horrible condition and disease; but when Moses lifted up the serpent, and bade him look and be saved, self was comparatively forgotten. He looked in faith and was healed. So while the

penitent in the former weeks of Lent has probed and examined his heart and bewailed his sin and uncleanness, he has been chiefly concerned with his own wretchedness and unworthiness of relief: but when to-day the Church begins to set before him CHRIST crucified as his cure, it is time to look unto Him and be saved—to cast our burden upon the LORD—to behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow which is done unto Him !

To-day is called Passion Sunday, because the Services begin to relate the story of our LORD's sufferings and death. CHRIST is exhibited as our Great High Priest; and from this time to Easter, the Lamb of GOD, dumb before His shearers, is the engrossing theme of wonder, of worship, and of love.

The Services of this day will strike the attentive worshipper, as singularly harmonious throughout—and blessedly full of the name that is honey in the mouth, and music in the ear—*mel in ore, melos in aure*. [The Chapters from Exodus (iii. v.) seem to be selected as giving us a vivid description of the slavery and oppression which GOD's people undergo in all times in the world, as they did of old time at the hands of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. They hold out to us also no indistinct hope of redemption and salvation by the power of that GOD to whom “their cry comes,” and who “has seen the oppression” wherewith the world, the flesh

and the devil, the Christian's enemies, oppress them. These chapters are therefore a fitting preparation for the due consideration of God's great work, when by the death of His blessed Son He visited and redeemed His people.] We may read for ourselves also that affecting prophecy of Haggai,* in which Jesus is promised as the "Desire of all nations." When Zerubbabel and Joshua and the residue of the people that had returned from captivity, (remembering the first temple and its glory,) beheld the second temple,—it was as nothing in their eyes: it lacked the Ark, and we read elsewhere that they wept at the humiliating contrast. But the Word of the LORD came unto them to give them comfort with the promise that the glory of the latter house should be greater than that of the former! How so? Because—said the LORD—the silver and the gold are mine, and if I so choose it may be made more beautiful with things like these. But the true meaning of my promise is that a better glory than that of gold and silver shall shine in this temple; the Desire of all nations shall stand here;—in this latter house the true Ark of the Covenant shall be seen; here will I give peace—for the Prince of Peace shall come to this temple!

We may then read in the twenty-first Chapter of St. Luke the story of the widow's mite, show-

* Ch. ii.

ing how He who claimed the silver and the gold as His could adorn the temple even more with a pious heart which was only able to give one farthing. Yet it rehearſes the admiration of the Apoſtles at the temple as “adorned with goodly ſtones,” for Herod had adorned it even with gold. But to ſhow that this was not the true fulfilment of the prophecy the LORD declares that all this is deſtined to be overthrown. Finally, we obſerve that “in the day-time He was teaching *in the Temple*.” Ah, here was the glory of the latter houſe ; GOD mani- feſt in the fleſh was there—and its glory was greater than that which the Queen of the South had panted to behold !

The Epiſtle is baſed upon this fulfilment. It begins—“*Chriſt being come*”—and declares His power to give us peace with GOD, as a High Prieſt of good things. And then the Holy Goſpel is a touching exhibition of the blindneſs of the Jews to this glory which had been the joy of Abraham, and the deſire of all nations ; for next it tells us how they took up ſtones to ſtone Him, and how JESUS *went out of the temple* ! So the glory departed—and Ichabod was henceforth its name, and deſolation its award.

The Introit might be Pſalm fifty-fourth ; but it is an ancient cuſtom to omit the Introit and the Gloria Patri on this day, and not to ſing the latter again till Eaſter Sunday.

Of the Collect it is only neceſſary to ſay that

with the Epistle and Gospel it remains as it stands in the ancient Sacramentaries for this Sunday. The Churches of Western Christendom at least have a common service on this day; though we alone enjoy it in the vulgar tongue.

In the Evening we may read Zech. xiii. in which we may profitably dwell upon two texts as peculiarly suited to the season. The first is—"There shall be a fountain opened, for sin and for uncleanness;" by which we are reminded of the water and the blood which flowed from the cleft side of the Redeemer. The other is—"Awake, oh sword, against my shepherd—against *the man that is my fellow*, saith the LORD of Hosts!" This text, it will be remembered, our SAVIOUR applied to Himself expressly—and thus, "thought it not robbery to be equal with GOD,"—*the man that is GOD's fellow!* How except by the Church's doctrines of the consubstantiality of the SON with the FATHER, and of the Mystery of the Incarnation, is such language to be interpreted?

The third Chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians will be found happily in keeping for our evening thoughts. The sacrifice for all of CHRIST,—Justification through His merits alone,—the fellowship of His sufferings and the power of His resurrection,—these are its themes. It concludes with a fervent exhortation, and a glorious promise of the Resurrection.

It will be a happy thing if our morning thoughts

this day could begin with the sentence — “The LORD is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him,”—in anticipation of the Lessons and the Altar Service.

Oh, how amiable would be the tabernacles of the LORD, if only all kept holy-day in the spirit and with the understanding of the inimitable Service of the Church this day! From now till Easter—the devout Churchman has a soul full of spiritual meat. He goes in and out and finds pasture with the good Shepherd; and beholds in all the glory of His wonderful humiliation the patient Lamb of God.

*The Sixth Sunday in Lent, or
Palm Sunday.*



REJOICE greatly, oh daughter of Zion behold, thy king cometh unto thee; He is just and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.” With these words for the Anthem, the Church in many places annually celebrates the day, on which the ancient prophecy was fulfilled. It was on the first day of the week in which He suffered that our LORD entered the Holy City in this way. The multitude, by a divine influence obeying the prophet, greeted His approach with Hosannas, and strewed their gar-

ments and waved palm-branches before Him. This beautiful and striking event in the life of our SAVIOUR, viewed in connection with the scenes that immediately followed,—(the *Hosanna* of Sunday contrasted with the *Away-with-him* of Friday),—has taken deep and mysterious hold upon the hearts and the judgments of men ; and though our ancient Church in the reign of the Sixth Edward laid aside the procession of palm-bearers, which before that had marked this day, its name of Palm Sunday still remains in good usage, and its associations still brighten with melancholy light the sombre solemnities of the week before us. Some few indeed there may be who still bear a sprig in their hands to Church, as a silent though expressive memorial of Him who disdained not to accept the same tribute from His Apostles ; for we learn, that owing to their former general use in this way, “ the catkins of the fallow or large-leaved willow, which are now in full bloom, are still called *palms* by the country-people of England.” It is better however that we can think as we go to Church in the bland spring sunshine, how as at this time and on such a day our blessed LORD came into Jerusalem to die for our sins. We can identify ourselves with the scene, and bring it before the eyes of our mind, as it was once in reality passing through the streets of Jerusalem. Here is our gracious Master, who has gone about doing good so long, approaching on His meek beast the

City that "flayeth the prophets and stoneth them that are sent unto her." The multitude are going up to the Passover, rejoicing to get a glimpse of the marvellous Nazarene, and, trusting that He is about to exert His miraculous power for the worldly restoration of His country, they have plucked down boughs from the trees, and are laying even their raiment beneath His feet.* He, the while, rides on in silence, for great is the travail of His soul, and His time is come. It is the day when the shepherds are driving the lambs into Jerusalem to be sacrificed at the Passover; the highways are full of the victims; but lo! here is the very Paschal Lamb led by His own love to the slaughter, and like the sheep before the shearer, opening not His mouth.

With such meditations let us employ our time till the Service begins. Then let us endeavour to do more than those who merely cast their vesture in the way, in obedience to the sentence—"Rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD." Such thoughts and meditations as these will help us in the day's Service, and will

* ["Whose religion," says Bishop Sparrow, quoting from Bernard, "let us imitate: We should meet Christ by keeping innocency: bear olive, by doing works of mercy; carry palms, by conquering the devil and our vices: green leaves and flowers we carry, if we be adorned with virtues: and we strew our garments in the way, when by mortification we put off the old man."]—ED.

assist us indeed in laying our hearts in the dust before the King of Glory.

[The 9th and 10th Chapters of Exodus, which are brought before us as the first Lessons for Morning and Evening Service, seem designed to show us how our God is able to bring down the mighty ones, the principalities and powers who are against our souls, and how heaven and earth shall depart from their usual courses rather than that one of the least of those dear to Him shall be cast down. We may depend upon it, that if we put our trust in the living God, the devil will at last be compelled, like Pharaoh, to "let us go."]

In the second Lesson let us observe the partial fulfilment of some of the prophecies, in the act of the woman who came with the alabaster box to "anoint the Most Holy." And as we listen to the fearful details of the Passion, as they are given by St. Matthew in this Lesson and in the Holy Gospel, let us resolve that forsaking, as far as possible, all worldly thoughts, we will devote this hallowed week to devout meditations on the cross, and ardent adoration of the Crucified.

The Introit, if one be used, may be Psalm 61st; —but Psalm CXVIII. is even more appropriate, especially from the 25th verse, as these are the words of the Hosanna which was shouted before CHRIST Himself on this day. In obedience to ancient custom there were no Introits appointed for the remaining days of the week, until Good-

Friday. The Collect, although it is the ancient Latin one for the day, has been beautifully and delicately improved in the process of translation.

The Gospel, as we have said, is the narrative of the Passion according to the first Evangelist : and the Epistle is comprehensive of the whole spirit of the week. Sublimely expressive as that glorious passage is in itself, we hear it on this day with emotion surpassing speech in connection with the overpowering solemnities of Palm Sunday, and associated with the scenes about to be renewed during the week. It compresses the whole Gospel into such a condensation of language ; it so vividly pictures the Incarnation—the Passion—and the Ascension together ; it so feelingly gives utterance to our overwhelming contemplations—that we spontaneously bow soul and body together, as the words of the Apostle are read to-day through all the churches of the saints—“ He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, *even the death of the Cross*. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name, which is above every name ; that at the name of JESUS, every knee shall bow and every tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST is Lord, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.”

Let it be observed that in both the Epistle and Gospel the Royalties of CHRIST are strikingly displayed. CHRIST, as the King of Israel, is the burthen of the day. JESUS was to be rejected

after a full declaration of His true character ; He was the King of the Jews, and as such He displayed himself on Palm Sunday. But His kingdom was not of this world.

We may read for ourselves before Evening Prayer the 3rd and 4th Chapters of the Prophet Malachi, as containing the prediction of CHRIST's coming to His Temple as He did this day to purify it: for it was on Palm Sunday that He scourged the money-changers and the buyers and sellers in the Court of the Gentiles. It also contains the promise of Elias, which the Jews used as a pretext for rejecting CHRIST: and also a prediction of the final judgment which is to come upon all who copy the Jews in their hardness of heart. In the Second Lesson the Great Melchisedec is exhibited—the Eternal Priest and the Eternal King.

The events of this day were in brief as follows. Our LORD, after reaching the Temple, healed many of the sick, blind, and lame, and graciously accepted the Hosannas of the children. St. Philip announced to our LORD that certain Greek proselytes, who could not enter the interior of the Temple, were anxious to see Him, and He therefore went to them in the Court of the Gentiles. Here He predicted the Conversion of the Gentiles as the glorious harvest of His own death and resurrection, and as He uttered a prayer to the Father was answered by a miraculous voice, which

the people mistook for thunder. Our LORD now fulfilled an ancient prophecy in clearing the Temple of the profane traffickers by whom it was polluted, and in so doing He seems to have been miraculously sustained, and also to have had the consciences and sympathies of the people in His favour. In this He gave a foretaste of the Last Day, and showed us that mercy does not destroy Judgment. He also proved how easily He might have overcome His enemies, and even seized the government, had such been His motive. St. John asserts that many of the chief priests did in fact believe on Him, but they were afraid to confess Him openly. At evening the Holy Saviour returned to Bethany with the twelve : and was probably the guest of the beloved Lazarus and his pious sisters.

The Holy Week.

MONDAY.

WE are drawing nearer and nearer to the Cross ; and do not our hearts burn within us in the way ? To those who really know the love of CHRIST which passeth knowledge what a season is this ! The Master calls us not servants but friends : we are not living in the nineteenth century, nor in the uttermost parts of the earth. We are carried back to the Holy Land, and to the passover which Jesus

desired to eat with His disciples. We are not hearing—we are *living* the history of our Redemption. Happy are they who duly celebrate these Mysteries, acquainting themselves more and more with Him whose countenance was marred more than the sons of men, but Who is to us the Chief among ten thousand, and the One altogether lovely.

How sublimely the Epistle for this morning opens: how augustly it ushers in the glorious sufferer, coming to redeem His people! Whether it be read in the quiet country church, or in the spacious choir of the cathedral, it is everywhere the same; yet every year more significant and more precious to the soul. “Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save!”

The whole of this glorious prophecy, read in immediate connection with Good Friday and Palm Sunday, strikes us as a happy illustration of the blessed way in which our Church ministers to us the rich bounties of the Word of God. We thus gain associations with different Scriptures, and learn their interpretation as a child learns language; not in harsh tasks from a mere master, but in delightful and winning intercourse with a mother, who day by day adapts her discourse to our growing powers, and impresses truth on our mind rather by association than by direct indoctrina-

nation. Hence this chapter gets its meaning in our minds from its place in our Liturgy. We care not for what mere critics and barren literalists may fancy to be the sense: *to us* it is full of the SAVIOUR; and whenever we see it in our Bible, we remember how it is wont to sound in our ears in the week of the Redeemer's Passion. Blessed and delightful way, in which the pure milk and the rich meat of the word are duly dispensed in their season to the children of CHRIST's bride! Some have objected that this prophecy speaks of a day of vengeance, whereas it was a day of suffering. But let us reflect that it is a highly lyrical poem, wherein the Passion is viewed as a contest with the powers of darkness, in which Satan's head was finally bruised. It was also a day of terrible vengeance to the Jews, and the scourging of those who profaned the Temple must be viewed as a foretaste of the terrible retributions which afterwards visited Jerusalem, and made that temple a heap of stones.

The Church has taken care that each of the Evangelists should be heard this week in his narrative of the Passion. So yesterday the Holy Gospel was taken from St. Matthew: and to-day St. Mark is begun. Though we do not include in our plan any commentary on the Scripture itself, yet we will note what is peculiar in the Gospel, as contributing to Liturgical completeness. The Gospel of St. Mark is traditionally ascribed

to the patronage of St. Peter; and there is little doubt that it was composed by his direction and care, although under inspiration of the HOLY GHOST. As St. Peter's fall and repentance therefore are an important part of the tremendous drama before us, his account of that transaction, with which the Holy Gospel concludes to-day, must be heard with peculiar interest. Let it be remarked then, that while the other Evangelists seem more slightly to detail his guilt, and more fully to record his penitence, he on the other hand gives his shame in all its baseness; and when he comes to speak of his repentance gives himself the least credit that is possible. Other Gospels say—"he went out and wept *bitterly*." St. Peter only says, "And when he thought thereon *he wept*." How eloquent the simplicity—how touching the silence of one, who in two words relates the hour of anguish the bitterness of which language could not describe. St. Peter seems to leave it with GOD; to say—I will not tell how I repented—LORD, thou knowest my groaning; put my tears into Thy bottle; and let the world see them at that day!

The Services of the day do not include any specially appointed Lessons. Those selected for the First Lessons in the usage of the American Church are taken mainly from the Prophet Daniel. In considering their appropriateness for this season it must be remembered that Daniel, who is called in

Scripture "the man greatly beloved," is in many points like unto St. John, "the beloved disciple:" and the prophecies which he was favoured to give were peculiarly "the testimony of JESUS." Thus in the Lesson for the day (Dan. x.) the prophet's description of the Son of GOD, whom he beheld in a vision, is remarkably like that of St. John, who in the Isle of Patmos beheld the same unchangeable LORD. Thus CHRIST is set before us as the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; the LORD alike of the Prophets and Apostles; the great I AM, "who was, and who is, and who is to come." The description of His vesture represents the Great High Priest of the Church. He was "clothed in linen;" surplised in His bright raiments as our glorious Melchisedec about to offer Himself, as a lamb without blemish, for the sins of the whole world. It finely accords therefore with the Epistle—"this that is glorious in His apparel?"

Together with this chapter may be read the fourteenth of St. John's Gospel, in which this gracious High Priest, touched with the feelings of our infirmities, condescends to talk with us and strengthen us, as He did the Prophet Daniel. How choicely the Church tells over her treasures, and counts and weighs the parting words of comfort, which fell from her divine LORD ere He left her eighteen hundred years ago!

In old time it was customary to rehearse, on

every day of the Passion Week, the events of that day ; the more forcibly to impress the minds of the people with the history of their redemption. In this way the great mysteries of our faith were solemnly renewed and commemorated annually. But a perversion of the original simplicity was introduced, and the clergy in an ignorant age invented scenic representations of the events. These have with great propriety been abolished in our reformed communions, as tending only to superstition and confusion. For thus grew up those dramas called MYSTERIES, or Scripture plays, which in time became painfully profane. But our object in mentioning this is to suggest the happy effect of the Mysteries of Passion Week, if only preserved in their original form. The pastor with his flock, the mother with her children, can still rehearse day by day during this week what Jesus did on each day for their souls. Thus will the Gospel story sink deeper into the heart ; and Passion Week and Easter be each year more perfectly realized and more earnestly desired.

Thus the Mysteries celebrated to-day would be the morning-walk from Bethany ; the cursing of the barren fig-tree, as a symbol of the Jewish nation ; the second cleansing of the temple ; and the return at nightfall to the Mount of Olives. As it was dark in all probability the disciples as they passed by failed to observe that the fig-tree was already withered.

TUESDAY.

THE events of this day, as given in the Harmonies of the Gospels, are very striking. As our LORD with His disciples passed the fig-tree, on their way to the city, they were appalled to see that it had withered away so soon. It was not only a type of the Jewish nation but also of the traitor Judas.

In the temple our Blessed SAVIOUR spake many of His parables on this day, and among others that of the vineyard and the wicked husbandmen. The hearers saw its bearings, and were apparently much affected by it for the time. As He left the Temple He was led by the pride which the disciples showed in its magnificence to foretell its speedy ruin; and seated on the Mount of Olives He further enlarged on this as a type of the end of all things. As the sun was setting He foretold His hour as fast approaching. Thus our LORD to-day abandoned the Temple for ever to its fate; and the Jewish people were solemnly given over to their own devices, in punishment for their rejection of the Messiah.

The Epistle is well suited to the day in which JESUS "endured such contradiction of sinners:" and the Gospel concludes the narrative of St. Mark. For private meditation the 11th Chapter of the Prophet Daniel may be taken, and the 11th,

12th, and 13th Chapters of Hosea. They are particularly deserving of our thoughtful study at this time, rehearsing, as they do, so fully and forcibly, the fearful promises of God, which were now about to be fulfilled on the Jewish nation, mingled with intimations of blessings which the Gospel should preserve and multiply.

WEDNESDAY.

OF "the Mysteries" celebrated this day, the conspicuous and absorbing one is the sale of "Him that was valued" for thirty pieces of silver.

The Epistle therefore explains why it was necessary to the new Covenant that JESUS should die; and as to-morrow will tell us how JESUS instituted the "New Testament in His blood;" so to-day rehearses how Moses with the blood of calves and goats ordained the first Testament with the words,—“this is the blood of the Testament, which God hath enjoined unto you.”

The Holy Gospel commences St. Luke's pictorial narrative of the sublime events of the Passion. Observe, in this Gospel the fact that our LORD was *blindfolded* when they smote Him. It has been well remarked, that but for this minute fact thus mentioned we should have been unable to see the point of St. Matthew's story; for that Evangelist merely states, that "they smote Him

with the palms of their hands, saying—Prophecy unto us, thou CHRIST, who is he that smote Thee.” Thus it is however that the more closely we inspect the Gospels the more we shall be convinced of their artless and simple truthfulness. Doubtless other things not easily explained as we now read would be very clear, if we understood all the customs and peculiarities of the times and places mentioned. Thus there is an apparent difficulty about the cock-crowings, which entirely disappears on the close comparisons of the most learned critics. The scarlet robe of one Evangelist is the same as the purple robe of the other; for the colour intended is a glaring combination of these dyes, well described by St. Luke as a gorgeous robe.

The Second Morning Lesson relates the remarkable prophecy of Caiaphas, which “he spake not of himself.” The Lesson from Hosea, read at Morning Prayer, contains the promise of the SAVIOUR, (to be fulfilled as at Easter,) “Oh death, I will be thy plagues; Oh grave, I will be thy destruction.”

MAUNDY-THURSDAY.

THIS day is so called as being *Dies Mandati*, the Day of the Mandate; that is to say of the command “do this in remembrance of Me.”

This day the Church’s gates are opened wide that the truly penitent may come back to the

SAVIOUR ; and begin anew to sup with JESUS according to His precepts. The warning to the Easter Communion is appropriately read* after the Holy Gospel ; and possibly that very solemn one which is provided in case the pastor has a negligent flock. Alas ! in these days, what pastor sees even the greater part of his adult flock zealous and faithful in attendance on the Holy Eucharist ? To-day all lukewarm believers are admonished. If there be those therefore who have allowed the world or their own carnal will to withdraw them from the altar, let them return this day in dust and ashes and forget their Redeemer no longer. Or if there be those who labour under the Church's discipline—to-day was of old the day of restoration ; let them ask of those who bear the keys of the visible Kingdom, and, if truly penitent, they again may be admitted to the fold.

We commemorate this day the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament of the EUCHARIST. The Morning Prayer might appropriately be introduced by that sentence taken from the Psalter—"The sacrifices of GOD are a broken spirit : a broken and contrite heart, O GOD, Thou wilt not def-

* [According to the usage of the American Church. Such a practice might well be introduced among ourselves, if only we could procure a better attendance at our churches during Passion-Week. As it is now among us, there are probably few, if any, who so attend, who are not regular Communicants.]

pife." With hearts attuned to this text, we might best approach the LORD's table, understanding something of the nature of true sacrifice, feeling something of the sinfulness of sin, and thus in some measure prepared to appreciate the great sacrifice for sin on the Cross.

The 9th Chapter of Daniel, appointed to be read in the Morning Service of this day, contains the well-known and appropriate prophecy "that Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself." With it may well be joined the 12th Chapter, which contains a sublime prediction of the Resurrection. This promise is peculiarly appropriate to this day of the Sacrament, as harmonizing with the SAVIOUR's pledge, "Who so eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

We commemorate also this day the washing of the disciples' feet; and so the Second Lesson tells how He who thought it not robbery to be equal with God took upon Him the form of a servant and "girded Himself with a towel," and condescended to wash the feet of the twelve—yea even the feet, that were "swift to shed blood," of one about to betray Him.

The Evening Lesson from Jeremiah contains the promise of that new covenant which on this Evening Jesus made in His flesh and blood.

The Epistle is St. Paul's narrative as he received it from the LORD, of the Institution of the Sacra-

ment of the new covenant : and contains his commentary thereon, and his exhortation to the worthy reception of the same. The Holy Gospel concludes St. Luke's narration of the Passion.

As we behold the Paschal moon this evening, making bright with her pale beams the scenes of the SAVIOUR's sufferings, let us think of Gethsemane, and of our LORD's mysterious agony, on which the same Paschal moon once shone ; and let us profitably meditate with shame and contrition on the profane retinue that came with lanterns and with staves, and laid hands on Him,—Whom His own familiar friend saluted with a traitorous kiss.

It may be interesting to mention, that with reference to the precept, "ye ought also to wash one another's feet," the kings of England were long accustomed to perform this ceremony, washing the feet of a number of beggars in public at Whitehall chapel, after morning-prayer this day. King James II. was the last who did this in person ; but at least as late as 1731, the Archbishop of York officiated instead of the Sovereign. When the ceremony ceased we cannot say precisely ; but a relic of it is still preserved in the annual procession at the Chapel Royal, and the distribution of loaves, &c. to a number of poor persons, corresponding numerically with the years of the Sovereign's age. Bags of silver are likewise distributed in the same way. All this is well ;—but let us

not forget the *spiritual* import of what JESUS did—teaching us by His example condescension, humility, and brotherly love.

Good Friday.



THIS is the great and awful day that commemorates a Redeemer's sufferings. Let us keep it in solemn fasting and humiliation, for our sins also were thorns to His glorious and immaculate Head, and nails to His holy and venerable hands.

The Service should begin of course with the most deeply penitential of the sentences, and the *Venite*, with other portions of the service which are usually sung, is said without music. As regards the Proper Psalms, the 22nd is the most fearful description of the Passion that is given in Holy Writ; and the 54th contains the oblation of Himself, which was made by the Blessed Word, ere yet He was Incarnate of the Virgin. The First Lesson is the narrative of the typical offering of Isaac; who, bearing the wood on his shoulder, as JESUS bore His cross, asks, "where is the lamb," and receives the answer from the Father of the Faithful—"God will provide Himself a lamb, my son." When it is remembered that it was on the same mount Moriah that JESUS in the fulness of time came bearing His cross like Isaac,—the amaz-

ing beauty of the Lesson will be seen and felt, and especially when the prophecy becomes explicit—"In the Mount of the LORD it shall be seen." It must be observed, moreover, that the whole transaction was designed to teach Abraham, and the faithful through him, that the love which he bore to his son, "his only son," was only a faint type of that of the FATHER to His well-beloved. St. Paul tells us that the unbinding of Isaac was a signal type of the Resurrection, and that Abraham acted as he did, sustained by the strong faith that GOD was able to raise him from the dead. Thus we see that the patriarchs knew and believed more of the Gospel than is usually supposed. The Second Lesson begins St. John's narrative of the Passion; and closes with the astounding declaration that he whom the Jews chose to release in His stead was a "thief and a robber!"

For the Introit may be sung a passage from the 22nd Psalm—"My GOD, my GOD, look upon me." The Collects are three; the first commemorative of JESUS; the second a supplication for the Faithful; and the third, (after the example of CHRIST,) a prayer for His murderers,—those infidels who crucify Him afresh, as well as the pagans who know Him not, those Turks and heretics who deny His power and Godhead—and those unhappy Jews who wander the earth, as living witnesses of the hour when their fathers cried, "His blood be on us and on our children."

The Epistle is a majestic passage from the Epistle to the Hebrews, explanatory of those blessed effects of the Redeemer's Incarnation and Passion, which, in spite of its fearful commemorations, has gained for this day the name of *Good Friday*. The Holy Gospel is the exceedingly full and tender narrative of that eye-witness, who alone of the Apostles clung to the cross, and succoured the Mother of our LORD, when the sword pierced through her heart. Of course we shall spare all comment on such a Gospel; which, after the other three have been read during the week, seems to be filled up with the accumulated pathos of the whole, and like a cup of trembling to overflow. After the words *It is finished*, and again after the words—*He bowed His head and gave up the Ghost*—it would seem well for the reader to pause, in order that the hearers may have time to reflect upon the tremendous import of the words. It concludes with a remarkable exposition of two prophecies, showing how minute are the details of the Hebrew Scriptures in their allusions to CHRIST. The Paschal Lamb was to be carefully slain, and no bone was to be broken; and Zechariah had said "They shall look on me whom they have pierced." Now we learn that both of these matters, the ordinance and the saying, were prospective, and fought their fulfilment in the one moment when after the death of JESUS the executioners forbore to break His legs, but a soldier thrust his spear into the side of the blessed Body.

It may at first appear strange that there is no Proper Preface at the Trisagion for so solemn a day. But the reason is that, except for the sick, the HOLY EUCHARIST is never properly celebrated on this Fast. As the day itself is a sad commemoration, and as the Eucharistic Feast less comports with the deep abasement of our humiliation this day,—there appears every reason of congruity for this custom.*

At Evening Service we shall find a sweet realization, that “the worst is o’er” with our Master; and like the holy Maries, “sitting over against the sepulchre,” our meditations will tenderly linger around the tomb of JESUS. In the whole course of the year there is no Lesson which comes into its place more effectively than this Evening’s Lesson from Isaiah, so full of pathos and beauty in itself, and so minutely descriptive of the events of the Passion. No one, on hearing it, can doubt that Isaiah “spake beforehand of the sufferings of CHRIST, and of the glory that should follow.”

[The Second Lesson calls us to make this a day, not only of reverent contemplation and blessed sorrow, but of practical example, when we strive to follow, at however great a distance, in the steps

* [This remark is not without truth, and many clergymen of our Church act upon it: but there appears after all no valid reason why the Body of our Lord broken for us and the Blood shed as on this day, should not on this day find their most full and significant commemoration.]

of Him, who, as St. Peter tells us, "did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth."]

Oh let us keep this fast with the true spirit of the publican, and of the repentant thief; and He who was crucified "shall see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied," when we, "who were as sheep going astray," have by His merciful guidance and help "returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls."

Easter Even.

WHERE anthems are sung, the most appropriate anthem for this day would be, "My flesh shall rest in hope: for why? Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell, neither shalt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

The First Lesson at Morning Prayer is chosen with reference to a text, which, as compared with the Epistle for the day, was always regarded by the Fathers as referring to the *Descent into Hell*, and "the preaching to the spirits in prison." "By the blood of thy covenant," says the Prophet Zechariah (ix. 11.) "I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water." The Second Lesson relates how JESUS was "with the rich in His death." At Evening Prayer, the First Lesson refers to the precept of the Passover. [The Second, taken from the fourth Chapter of the Epistle

to the Hebrews, warns us of the danger of unbelief, which may shut us out even from the blessings procured by the death of CHRIST, as it shut out GOD's ancient people from the rest provided for them; while at the same time it comforts and encourages the fearful believer, by inviting him, in the strength of CHRIST's work now accomplished on the Cross, to "come boldly to the throne of grace, that he may obtain mercy."]

From the customs of the early Church, which protracted the service of this day through the night till Easter morning, it still traditionally retains the name of Easter Even. It is of all vigils the most absorbing and delightful. As for the "Man of sorrows,"—with Him the worst is over; the battle is fought—His victory is won, His soul has gone to Paradise. We commemorate His mysterious DESCENT INTO HELL with the happy spirit of the repentant thief. Meantime His dead body reposes in Joseph's tomb: the seal is on the stone; the guards are pacing around it; the Paschal moon is gleaming on their helmets and spears. The Church, with fragrant spices of remembrance keeps vigil like Magdalene and Mary. At the Introit, therefore, which is often and with striking effect used at this time, she as it were forgets that she is *commemorating*, and rather *anticipates* the Resurrection of her LORD. How expressively she describes the condition of His body in the sealed sepulchre, as she sings the *Domine Deus*: (Psalm 88.)

“Free among the dead, like unto them that are wounded and lie in the grave, who are out of remembrance and are cut away from Thy hand!

Dost Thou show wonders among the dead! or shall the dead rise up again, and praise Thee!

Shall Thy wondrous works be known in the dark; and Thy righteousness in the land where all things are forgotten!”

As we have heard this sung on Easter Even, we have almost been able to identify ourselves with those who with such despairing words “rested on the Sabbath, according to the commandment,” and looked for the morning that they might hasten to the tomb—eighteen hundred years ago!

As we are “buried with CHRIST in baptism,” so Easter-Even has for time immemorial^a been the great baptizing time; on which especially, those catechumens who have been prepared during Lent are brought to the laver of Regeneration.* To this custom the beautiful Collect for the day has especial reference.

The Epistle is singularly appropriate; containing the doctrines of the *Descent into Hell*; of *Regeneration* in baptism; and of the *Resurrection* of JESUS CHRIST for our justification. In the Services of this day it seems appropriate that the two Creeds should be used alternately: one as contain-

[* See “Wheatley on the Common Prayer:” Sec. xvi. Easter Eve.]

ing the descent into hell, and the other the language "I believe in one baptism for the remission of sins, &c."

The Holy Gospel embalms the name of him who embalmed the world's Redeemer and laid Him in his own new tomb. It recounts the interment of Jesus; the vigil of the two Maries who sat "over against the sepulchre;" the testimony of the chief-priests to CHRIST's prediction that He would rise again; the sealing of the stone and the setting of the watch. So then the enemies of Christ have made it "as sure as they can." Go your way from such a service, and come early on the morrow:—let us see what Pilate's guard, and their seal upon the stone shall avail against the promise of Him, who is the Resurrection and the Life.

Easter Day.



CHRIST is risen! Such is the shout which encircles the earth as this morning's sun wakes up the world! To-day ten thousand temples are crowded; ten thousand altars spread; ten thousand voices sing, "CHRIST our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast!"

Early, while it is yet dark, in some places, the fingers go about the streets with the song,

"Vain the stone, the watch, the seal,
CHRIST has burst the gates of Hell!"

CHRIST, the LORD, is risen to-day,
Sons of men and Angels say."

At Morning Prayer, after the opening sentence follow as usual the confession, absolution and LORD's Prayer; and then at the prayer "oh LORD, open Thou our lips," bursts forth the anthem "CHRIST is risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept." The words "CHRIST, our Passover, &c.," and the exhortation "let us keep the feast" show that the Christian Passover is an Apostolic Institution. St. Paul wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians at Easter, and hence the pertinancy of his appeal (1. Cor. v. 7.) to them as "unleavened"—that is, keeping the days of unleavened bread. The Jewish Christians seem to have used unleavened bread at the LORD's Supper, but the Apostle bids them to be spiritually unleavened. Year after year as this glorious strain begins, we find ourselves wishing it may not be over too soon—and then as it dies away, regretting that a year must pass ere we hear it again—and that possibly we shall hear it and sing it to the glory of the risen Redeemer never again on earth!

Then follow the Proper Psalms, which are prophecies of the Resurrection, collected from the Psalter, and which, though written ages before CHRIST came, are still the best poetical descriptions of His history.

The First Lesson is the Institution of the Paschal Feast, which took place more than three

thousand years ago, and was enjoined to be kept for ever ; as it has been in Jewish shadow or in Christian substance ever since ; and as to time's end it ever shall be, as surely as the moon, which GOD set for signs and for seasons, comes annually to her Paschal maturity. How sublime the thought, as we thus read the warrant for our festival, to think that in our generation we have risen up to observe it also and to pass it to our posterity, saying when our children ask " what mean ye by this service ? "—" It is the LORD's Passover."

How expressive in the Te Deum which follows is the strain—" When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the kingdom of Heaven to all believers."

In the Second Lesson, contrary to the usual rule for Morning Prayer, we read an Epistle instead of a Gospel ; and this is done that the fervent Apostle of the Gentiles may be heard, exhorting us " that like as CHRIST was raised up from the dead by the glory of the FATHER, even so we should walk in newness of life."

Then, if the *Jubilate* is sung, how appropriate its burthen, " Be joyful all ye lands ! " Or if the *Benedictus* follows, how new and fresh a meaning is given by the day to the passage " He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath *raised up* a mighty Salvation for us in the house of His servant David."

It is strictly rubrical to conclude the Morning Prayers without the Litany, which may be said

afterwards at any time before Evening Prayer. The desire of every communicant to present himself at the LORD's Table on this festival, in obedience to the recognized duty of partaking, at least at Easter, of the blessed Sacrament of CHRIST's Body and Blood, sometimes renders the solemnities too protracted to be to the end enjoyed; but where the services succeed each other as was designed, there is the happiest combination of continued service, and desirable bodily refreshment. Thus Morning Prayer may be offered at sunrise; and at a later hour follows the Litany, in which as many as can attend join fervently with the minister. At ten, or later, begins the great service of the day—the EASTER EUCHARIST. As the priest enters the chancel, the old Introit may be devoutly chaunted—or the metrical version is sung—“Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither shalt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.” After the Decalogue as usual comes the beautiful Collect, commemorative of Him who “hath overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life.” To this succeeds the Epistle, “*If ye then be risen with CHRIST, seek those things which are above;*” and then follows the Holy Gospel, in which the beloved Apostle describes to us the early scene at the Sepulchre, on the morning of the first Easter Sunday.

The Nicene Creed follows; and then the minister ascends the pulpit, to preach like St.

Paul at Athens, "JESUS and the Resurrection." Where the services are thus arranged, he has both time and strength to prepare us for what is to follow by the thrilling doctrines which he must on this day proclaim to the people of GOD. Oh, sublimest hour in the Christian's year; when the Paschal Altar is spread—and all things are ready, and the ambassador of CHRIST bids us come to the Supper of the Lamb!

And now the Sermon is over; and the thoughtless and gazing multitude have withdrawn, and the doors are shut, and CHRIST is within, as of old. Before the Altar stands the commissioned agent of His own eternal priesthood—once again to "do this in commemoration of Him!" How wonderfully this sublime memorial fulfils its purpose; how augustly as it proceeds, CHRIST is set forth "before our eyes, crucified among us!" At the Preface, how touching is the recognition of CHRIST, as the very Paschal Lamb; and in the Trisagion, how are we joined in adoration with the heavenly choir itself!

The words of Institution recount the solemn scenes of the week, and remind us of the upper chamber in which the last Passover and the first EUCHARIST were celebrated. For this Communion there is great propriety in using the verses beginning,

"All worthy Thou who hast redeemed,
And ransomed us to GOD."

But there are several hymns which may lend appropriate verses to this Service.

Thus—recurring to Good-Friday ;

“ ’Tis finished—heaven is reconciled
And all the power of darkness spoiled ; ”

or, again—anticipating the Ascension ;

“ The rising GOD forakes His tomb,
Up to His FATHER’S court He flies ; ”

or, in view of the eternal Easter Song ;

“ Who are these in bright array,
This innumerable throng ? ”

And then we receive the heavenly food itself ; and so go in peace to our homes with many a holy resolve and secret prayer, “ to go in the strength of that meat ” all our lives, even unto the Mount of GOD. Oh, what a happy day ! Like those who kept the first Easter with CHRIST, our hearts have burned within us all the time ; and He hath made Himself known to us in the BREAKING OF BREAD.

The Evening Psalms and Lessons follow the analogies of the Morning Service ; but the Second Lesson must be specially noted as an Apostolic Sermon on the text, “ Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.” It is an exposition of the Morning Introit. As we thus conclude the festival, let us praise GOD that now in all the world the same Church of CHRIST confesses Him with boldness,

which on the first Easter was contained in one room at Jerusalem, and that “secretly, for fear of the Jews.”

Easter-Monday.

EASTER-TIDE continues through the octave of Easter-day, that is, for eight days inclusive. But for two days only are special services appointed, that all the Scriptures peculiarly referring to the Resurrection may be read, and that the opportunity of communion may be still afforded: for it is required by universal consent, as well as by the ancient canons, that every one should endeavour to receive the Holy Communion at the Easter season.

The gift of manna, which was a foreshadowing of the true Bread of Heaven, as we learn from CHRIST Himself (St. John vi. 31, 32.) is the subject of the First Lesson, in connection with the First Passover of the Hebrews. Observe also how the seventh day was hallowed in prospect of the rest of JESUS in the tomb; and how, on the first day—a new supply of manna was given in token of the weekly Easter or Sunday. It is also to be noted that on Friday a double portion of manna was given, that being the day on which the Bread of Heaven should be given for all the world. The Second Lesson is St. Matthew’s account of the Resurrection.


At Evening Prayer, the First Lesson refers in type and figure to the living Rock which followed them, the spiritual drink of which all the Israelites were privileged to partake, and "that Rock was CHRIST." Surely by all the events which we have commemorated, His great humiliation, and the great glory which followed, He has established His claim to be our Rock. May we so pass this and other Easter seasons that we may more and more be found under His shade. The Second Lesson is St. Peter's sermon in Solomon's porch, where "the Prince of Life," of whom he speaks, had walked so lately (St. John x. 23), and where they had threatened to stone Him. This Lesson, it must be remembered, concludes just where St. Peter's sermon was interrupted by the Captain of the Temple with the priests and Sadducees, who were "grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the Resurrection of the dead."

The Epistle is the narrative of the first preaching of the Resurrection to the Gentiles, in the case of Cornelius: and the Gospel is the story of the walk to Emmaus, and of the first Easter Eucharist—which was celebrated by our LORD Himself, after an Easter Sermon which He Himself preached. So on the return of Easter, our hearts should burn within us, as the Church, under the guidance of the Spirit without whom all her efforts are vain, "opens to us the Scriptures," and as

CHRIST still makes Himself known to us in the "breaking of bread."

In Easter Week it is usual to commence the parochial year; Churchwardens are appointed, and everything begins afresh. Thus the month Abib was enjoined in the first Lesson of yesterday to be "the first month in the year to you."

Easter-Tuesday.

ASTER, like Christmas, is a time of household rejoicing; and when the solemnities of Sunday are passed, a moderate festivity should be encouraged.

The very children, with their gilded Easter-eggs,—the egg being an oriental Symbol of life in a sepulchre, which breaks forth of itself and flies to heaven,—should be made to understand why it is meet to make merry; and Who it is, that "was dead and is alive again."

During the whole of the Easter Season, the concluding prayers of the Burial Service might be used by the clergy after Sermons and elsewhere with undoubted propriety. But there are no special Collects for these supplementary days in Easter-week.

[The Lessons from Exodus appear to have been selected with a view to bring before us Moses as a type of Christ, in the morning Lesson as the giver

of a law, which was to be made broader and wider and higher and deeper by the great Antitype ; and in the evening as an Intercessor praying of God to blot him out of His Book for the sake of His sinful people, no doubtful figure of Him "who was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." The Second Lesson in the Morning Service takes us back to the Resurrection-day, and shows us the vision of angels which said, "Why seek ye the living among the dead : He is not here, He is risen." Let us lay this to heart for our instruction, when it pleases GOD to take our dear ones from our sight and lay their bodies in the grave. Let us not dwell on the worm and corruption, but on the glorious thought : our friend is not here ; he lives unto GOD in the anticipated power of that Resurrection, through which he shall one day stand again in his body on the earth ; and that body (as the Second Evening Lesson, the great Burial Service Lesson of our Church, teaches us) one that shall have put on incorruption, and come forth "a glorious body," never again to sicken, grow weak and die. Surely we may well "comfort ourselves and one another" with these thoughts.]

The Epistle is St. Paul's sermon at Antioch, preached in the Synagogue after the Lessons for the day had been read, in which he proved from the prophets that CHRIST was the true David, and that He must have risen from the dead. The

Gospel continues the Gospel of yesterday, and concludes our Easter solemnities, at the Altar, with the words of our triumphant LORD Himself.

First Sunday after Easter.



HIS is sometimes called *Low Sunday*, or the *Sunday of Albs*. The former name, pertaining to it as the octave of Easter, signifies that although not the High Feast, it is the first of the Lower Easters, which we keep every week; and the latter is an old name, derived from the throngs of Catechumens who in ancient times appeared at Church in the albs or white garments given to them at their baptism. This ceremony of Albs is done away, but not so the spirit of the same. The Church would have us now revert all together to that rising with CHRIST out of the burial of baptism in which our Christian life began; and it will be observed that the edifying of the young Christian in practical holiness is a prominent thought in the spirit of the Services from this time till Pentecost, when the riper fruits of the Spirit are brought into view.

“Pureness of living” is therefore prominent in the language of the Collect; while the Epistle contains the doctrine which is embodied in the familiar hymn,

“Let the water and the blood
From thy side a healing flood,

Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure."

One of the texts occurring in the Epistle may be regarded as an Epitome of Revelation :—" And this is the record, that GOD hath given to us eternal life, and *this life is in His Son.*" The flaming sword is removed and the fall remedied ; we may now put forth our hands to the Tree of Life, and eat, and live for ever. The SON of GOD hath destroyed the works of the devil, and henceforth " He that hath the SON hath life ; and he that hath not the SON, hath not life." Mere Deism, or Socinianism will not save a man. Salvation turns on the acceptance of the SON of GOD, and on being so grafted into Him as to partake His life.

With this great truth is connected the Gospel for the day, " As My Father hath sent me, *even so send I you.*" Here is the great mission of the ministry of reconciliation. There are in the world authorized Ambassadors for CHRIST, administering " the water and the blood " to the souls of men for the remission of sins. And now follows the great bestowal of the keys ; " Receive ye the HOLY GHOST ; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." In this formula is bestowed the authority to bind and loose, to baptize, and to administer the LORD's Supper ; and by admitting to or excluding from the Sacraments, to remit and retain sins. But there is no arbitrary

power conferred in these words : and the priesthood bind nothing and loose nothing except they act *according to the laws of the Kingdom*. The truly penitent and believing alone, with little children, receive benefit from these powers ; and only the unworthy and unbelieving need dread the sentence of excommunication, or other censures. An ancient Father observes that when a Bishop or Presbyter censures or excommunicates otherwise than as CHRIST has ordained, he only harms himself.

It must be observed, that, *primarily*, the words of this great text refer to the “one baptism for the remission of sins,” which is professed in the Creed. The forms of absolution and confession for baptized persons are of Ecclesiastical origin, and have greatly differed in different ages of the Church, being adjuncts of the one sacrament, and preparatives to the other ; but not sacraments in themselves. They are however requisites to full Communion in the nature of things, and must of necessity exist in some form or other. The gross abuses and frauds, which have been practised in this matter by corrupt churches, make it all important that we should the more carefully keep the truth as here recorded.

The Apostolic Commission was instituted after the Resurrection. CHRIST had not given any general Commission to His Apostles when He died on the Cross, though He had promised that

He *would* give them the keys. Consequently, the existence of a body of men bearing this Commission is a perpetual witness of the Resurrection. This "Apostolical Succession"—as it is called—is a perpetual token that CHRIST rose from the dead, and that He sent forth witnesses to proclaim His Resurrection, with whom He promised to remain till the end of the world.

[The First Lesson, from the 16th Chapter of the Book of Numbers, warns us that none should take upon themselves the Commission to speak in CHRIST's name, to whatever Church or Denomination they belong, unless they are assured in their very heart of hearts, that they are called and sent of CHRIST: that as the FATHER sent the SON not to seek His own glory, but the FATHER's who sent Him, not to be ministered unto but to minister, so should those also whom CHRIST sends be in this world. Unless their hearts burn with the love of souls, unless they long to enter upon "the fields which are white to the harvest," unless "their meat and drink be to do their LORD's will, and to finish His work," let them not venture, at whatever human call, to take upon themselves this great Commission. "It is required of stewards, that a man be found faithful;" and woe to that man who for gain or honour shall presume to take part in the Ministry of the Gospel, or who having taken part shall either neglect his flock, or attempt to be a lord over God's heritage.]

The first Chapter of the Acts may this day be carefully studied, as not only completing the melancholy history of Judas, but showing how God took care that the Apostolic line should be continued, to witness the Resurrection. The text—"His bishoprick let another take"—is proof that the successors of the Apostles are rightly termed *Bishops*, although that term is a generic one like the term *pastor*, and in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus it is in a limited sense used for the inferior office of the Presbyter also. The Presbyter was one of the Bishops or pastors of a particular flock or congregation; but the Apostle was the Bishop of a district like Crete, or of a whole city like Ephesus, and hence he is called in the Revelation the "Angel" of such a Church—*Angel* and *Apostle* meaning the same thing—a messenger. We usually give the name *Angel* to heavenly messengers however, and the name *Bishop* with equal propriety to chief pastors.

In our evening meditation and prayer on this first Sunday after Easter, let us strive to keep up a vivid memory of the great Resurrection Fact, which is as it were the centre of the Christian Life. And for this purpose what portion of Scripture can be more fitted than that which our Church has selected for public reading on Easter Tuesday? The fifteenth Chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians is the sublimest of all those glorious bursts of inspired poetry with which St.

Paul's Epistles abound. It is the fullest exposition we have of the doctrine of the Resurrection: it declares that the resurrection bodies of the righteous shall be as truly their own bodies as any flower is the product of its own particular seed. On the other hand it shall not be the body that dies and is buried, any more than the same glorious flower is the insignificant seed that was sown. The identity consists in the connection between the product and the germ: "to every seed his own body," and yet—"thou sowest not that body that shall be." The text, "what shall they do which are baptized for the dead?" seems to have reference to the martyrs, whose baptism of blood for a dead CHRIST, and for dead Patriarchs and Apostles, would then be without a shadow of hope. On the other hand, for a living CHRIST and for the patriarchs and prophets as "living unto Him" in the power of His Resurrection, the martyrs might well consent to be "baptized with the baptism that He was baptized with," and St. Paul and others might as willingly "stand in jeopardy every hour." As for the Apostle's "fighting with beasts at Ephesus," although he may have contended in the arena in some unrecorded persecution, it is more likely that he here speaks of his persecutors as "beasts;" for so St. Ignatius, the Martyr Bishop of Antioch, in his Epistle to the Romans, speaks of the "ten leopards," or soldiers, that guarded him, and who abused him with rude indignities as he journeyed

towards Rome to be devoured by lions in the Flavian amphitheatre.

Second Sunday after Easter.



HIS is the day which the French call so prettily the Sunday of the *Bon Pasteur*, referring to the beautiful words of the Gospel, "I am the Good Shepherd."

The Gallican Church until lately retained many other ancient resemblances to the Anglican ; for the genuine Gallicans did not wholly submit to the Roman yoke even at the Council of Trent. Unhappily for them however they gave enough power to the Pope to enable him to destroy their ancient Church ; and to substitute for it, after their first Revolution, a purely papal one, which has almost entirely abolished the good things that were left and for which the nobler spirits among them once contended so boldly.

The Epistle speaks of CHRIST as "the Bishop, and *Shepherd* of our souls ;" and the Gospel expounds the idea contained in that beautiful name, which Jacob first gave the Messiah, when he said — "from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel." In the Collect, the Good Shepherd, "who laid down His life for His sheep," is exhibited as our atoning sacrifice and our blessed example ; and we pray for grace to accept His atone-

ment and to follow His steps. The Introit to-day can be no other so appropriately as the 23rd Psalm.

[The First Lessons are taken from the Book of Numbers, and set before our sight the picture of a faithless shepherd, constrained by the power of God who inspired him to speak the words of God and none other, and yet ready at the first opportunity to betray and hinder the people of God's choice, whom he had so unwillingly blessed. Nor must we fail to recognize the purpose of our Church in selecting the prophecy of Balaam for our reading on this day, as bringing before us vividly the Person and the glory of Him who was to come forth as a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre out of Israel.]

The earnest pleading of a true shepherd may be profitably studied this evening in the first Chapter of Colossians, where in St. Paul we see the character of a good pastor under CHRIST the Chief Shepherd,—“rejoicing in his sufferings” for the flock of CHRIST, and “warning every man and teaching every man, in all wisdom.” This same chapter abounds with references to the redemption which we have through CHRIST's blood, “even the forgiveness of sins.”

Third Sunday after Easter.

THE spirit of the service is denoted by the Collect, which, (primarily with respect to the Catechumens baptized at Easter, but not less intentionally with respect to others,) beseeches GOD, that all who are sworn under CHRIST's banner may wear such a livery of fidelity, that those who are in error may see their good works and learn to follow them, and so to follow CHRIST.

Christian consistency in the profession of CHRIST crucified is the theme of the day ; and its mighty power over sinners to persuade them to repentance —this is suggested. The Epistle therefore shows us what sort of morality this consistency requires : and draws our attention to the true nature of that liberty with which CHRIST by His death and Resurrection has made us free : a liberty, not to do what we like without reference to GOD's will, but one which includes in it the love of GOD and of His holy will, while at the same time it sets us free from the law of sin and death. “ I will run in the way of Thy commandments, when thou hast set my heart at liberty ; ” this is the Christian's Charter of Freedom, by which he *willingly* follows the leadings of his GOD. The Gospel shows us whom we follow, and whither He is leading us by His example. He says — “ I go to the

FATHER," and adds—"I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice."

The Second Lesson contains an awful instance of inconsistent and hypocritical profession among the early disciples. The case of Ananias and Sapphira should teach us how fearful it is to attempt to deceive ourselves or others, in dealings with the Church of God and the ministers of CHRIST. As the First Lesson hints the eternal, so this Lesson shows the temporal consequences, with which God sometimes visits such iniquity.

In the Evening Lessons, while we note the promise—"the Word of the LORD shall go forth from Jerusalem," as fulfilled in the rise of the Christian Church; we must not forget that this Word is a Moral Law as well as a Gospel,—and that it is described in the text "He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths." The Second Lesson, which repeats the Easter Gospel, is a summary of these *ways* and *paths*, which Christians are called to keep: and concerning which we pray in the Eucharist, that we may continue in them, and "do all such good works, as He hath prepared for us to walk in."

[During the remaining Sundays after Easter, and for the Sunday after Ascension Day the Church has selected for our public reading portions of the Book of Deuteronomy, in which Moses declares to the Israelites the mercies which they have received of God, and the love and

obedience with which they are bound to requite those mercies. They who knew the greatness and power of God in that they had heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, how should they dare to offend against Him who to His enemies is "a consuming fire?" They whom God had "brought forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt,"* whom he had brought "into a good land, a land of brooks of water, . . . a land of wheat and barley, . . . a land where they should eat bread without scarceness, and should lack nothing in it;"† — how should they forget so merciful a God "in not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes?"‡ How obvious is the lesson to ourselves! Let us who have seen such great things—the power of God in CHRIST's resurrection, His abounding love in CHRIST's crucifixion, beware lest in an idle contemplation of these blessings and these wonders, we forget the great truth, the inmost meaning of all these miracles of love and power: "this is the will of God, even our sanctification."]

* Deut. iv. 20. † Deut. viii. 7, 8. ‡ Deut. viii. 11.

Fourth Sunday after Easter.

THE Gospel for the day dwells on the LORD's predicted Ascension, and on His promise of the Comforter. The Epistle reminds us of the glory that shall be revealed in us, by hinting the nature of this gift of the Comforter, who comes down from the "Father of Lights" for the purpose of preparing us to go up to Him, and to be "partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light." The Collect suggests to us the desire of CHRIST's promises and the love of His precepts, as the means of keeping the heart fixed "where true joys are to be found," even amid the changes of this world.

The difficult passage in the Gospel may be comprehended by the reflection, that the Comforter is also the Advocate of CHRIST, and came to finish the work which CHRIST began, by striving with men's hearts in behalf of their SAVIOUR. He convinces them of the great comprehensive sin of unbelief,—as when "they were pricked to the heart" in view of their having crucified the LORD of Glory. He convinces them of the righteousness of CHRIST by His exaltation to the right hand of the FATHER, and so of the righteousness which sinners may derive from Him who thus liveth for our justification. Finally, He convinces men of judgment to come, because "the Prince of this

World" is judged already — that is to say, by CHRIST's triumph over him on the Cross where He bruised Satan's head, and "spoiled principalities and powers." This promise being fulfilled, the remaining judgment of the world is as certain as what has already been executed on "the prince of this world." Compare the words of CHRIST, (St. John xii. 31.) "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out."

[Let us dwell much upon this Gospel, not in our own strength, nor by the help of human commentators alone or mainly, but with earnest prayer to Him "who is His own interpreter," and who will at length make all things plain to us. The Christian should lose no opportunity which the Services or selections of the Church afford him of contemplating the coming and the work of the Holy Spirit of God. "To walk by faith, not by sight;" this is the great duty of man: and perhaps there is no point in which our carnal, worldly hearts find so much practical difficulty, as in the belief in the real operation of the Holy Ghost, in His offices of Teacher, Guide, Comforter, and Advocate. Let us pray of Him now that He will come to us and "reprove (or convince) us of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment."]

*Fifth Sunday after Easter, or Rogation
Sunday.*

WHEN a friend departs to visit a glorious City and the Court of a great King, we have messages to send by him.

When we have a friend at court to present our petitions to the great king himself, we feel emboldened to make known our requests. These two ideas are made prominent to-day. JESUS is our Intercessor and Advocate with the FATHER; hence Prayer and its nature, as presented through CHRIST's merits and intercession, are the subjects of this day's services, in view of the "going up on high" of our Great High Priest.

The Collect recognizes the FATHER as the "Giver of all good things," and suggests that, as in keeping His Commandments "*there is great reward*," our lives should in the first place correspond with our prayers. This also is the idea of the Epistle, which enjoins a practical, instead of a ceremonial religion; for the *religion* here spoken of means the *profession* of religion, which is better made in a spotless and benevolent life, than in noisy words, or in hearing without obeying the Gospel. Let no man suppose however that he "keeps himself unspotted from the world," if he

does not live in full communion with the Church of the living GOD, which is the only Ark of refuge from the world's pollutions. The Gospel, while it contains the intimation of the Ascension, dwells on the nature of prayer—as “asking in CHRIST’s Name.” Since our LORD’s Ascension, no one has ever prayed aright who did not expressly or by implication say—“through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.” He alone is worthy to ask and to “receive gifts for men:” we only venture to ask for His merits’ sake, and receive through the channel of His love. The fitness of this Gospel to the week of the Rogation-fasts must be apparent.

Read on this morning the eighth Chapter of Zechariah, and the eighth of the Acts of the Apostles. In the chapter from Zechariah, note among other texts the allusion to the fasts of Israel, as “cheerful feasts;” and also the promise, “the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase.” One of the primary purposes of the Rogation-fasts was to supplicate a blessing on the fruits of the earth before harvests.* In the New Testament Chapter we see a fulfilment of one of the promises, that of Zechariah: where an Ethio-

* [“Because this time of the year, the fruits of the earth are tender and easily hurt: therefore Litanies extraordinary are said to GOD to avert this judgment.” Sparrow, *Rationale of Common Prayer*.]

pian as it were “takes hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew,” and says to Philip, “I will go with you—for I have heard that God is with you.” This Ethiopian had become a profelyte before, and had been to Jerufalem to worship on a like principle.

Another object of these fasts was to deprecate war; and in dwelling on this, let us remember that—“they shall fight, because the LORD is with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded.” Here, the adversary is represented as overcome and forced to be peaceful by the power of God. The spiritual enemy must not be forgotten however; nor those terrible “riders on horses,” (in the Apocalypse,) War, Pestilence, and Famine, against whom the “Faithful and True” went forth “conquering and to conquer.” This is the teaching of the Second Lesson, where Jesus is portrayed as having overcome death, and enabled all believers to conquer the same enemy in His strength.

There is no Rogation Collect properly so called; but on this day and the three Rogation Days following, it would be well to use after the Collect for the day that beautiful one appended to the Communion Office—“Almighty God the Fountain of all wisdom, Who knowest our necessities before we ask, and our ignorance in asking.” This Collect sums up the teaching of the Gospel for the day in the words with which it concludes:

“those things which for *our unworthiness* we dare not, and for our blindness *we cannot ask*, vouchsafe to give us *for the worthiness* of Thy Son.”

*Rogation Days.**

THESE Fasts are meant to prepare us for the Communion on Ascension-day ; to which great festival they are as a minor Lent. CHRIST goes up to be our Intercessor : hence the great subject of *Prayer*, as connected with Sacrifice and the Mediatorial work of CHRIST, comes prominently into view.

The origin of these fasts is comparatively modern, as they do not date from Apostolic times, but were instituted in the fifth century. Mamercus, Bishop of Vienne in Gaul, is said to have appointed them in deprecation of the ravages of the Northern Barbarians, which then seemed to threaten the existence of the Church in many places ; while earthquakes and pestilences apparently connected them with the wrath of God. On this occasion, the Litany received an addition of those Rogations, which are commonly known as “the Lesser Litany” among us,† because they are usually omitted on Sundays

[* “Supplications, which the Greeks call *Litanies* but the Latins *Rogations*.” Wheatley on the Common Prayer.]

[† In the American Service Book, after the two prayers in the Litany, commencing, “Oh Lamb of God,” &c. the Rubric directs that “the Minister may, at his discretion, omit all that follows to the prayer, ‘We humbly beseech Thee,’” &c.]

and other festive days when the Litany occurs to be said, and are reserved for days of fasting and the like. These Rogations were not merely offered in Church but in the open air, the people going in processions and saying them responsively with their pastor. One can imagine the impressiveness, in such circumstances of the suffrage—"Oh God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us, the noble works which Thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them." Then came the response—"Oh LORD, arise, &c."

At the Reformation in the Church of England, the Rogation processions were retained, and in some places they have been kept up to the present day. The Curate with his parishioners, used to walk round the parish, pausing at certain metes and bounds to offer thanksgivings, and to implore a blessing on the fields and farms. He also at times recited the Mosaic formula—"Curst be he which translateth the bounds and doles of his neighbour," and the 104th Psalm, *Benedic anima mea*, was said, or sung, responsively.* Of these observances good George Herbert was a great favourer, in his day, because, as he says in his "Country Parson," (a charming old Church-book, which nobody should be ignorant of) "there are

[* See Wheatley on the Common Prayer; Sec. xx. Of the Rogation Days.]

contained therein four manifest advantages—*First*, a blessing of GOD for the fruits of the field; *Secondly*, justice in the preservation of bounds; *Thirdly*, charity in loving, walking, and neighbourly accompanying one another, with reconciling of differences at that time if there be any; *Fourthly*, mercy in relieving the poor by a liberal distribution and largesse, which at that time is or ought to be used. (Whereupon he exacts of all to be present at the perambulation) . . . There is much preaching in this friendliness.” (In America this pretty rural ceremony is hardly possible, owing to the variety of sects which injure our Christianity, and destroy good neighbourhood: but the Rogation-fasts can be observed in Church; observing, that the American Church has added a Thanksgiving Feast to the Calendar, as “a blessing of GOD for the fruits of the field,” which corresponds with these fasts very perfectly. It will be seen that the idea of such a Thanksgiving is of Church origin, and as it is now kept in America, engrafs the spirit of the Rogation Days upon the old English “Harvest home.”)

Among the Homilies will be found a curious one, divided into three parts, for these days; but they are not in all parts suitable for modern use. The Rogation Collect already noted at the close of the Communion Service, with the use of the Rogations on Wednesday when the Litany is said, will sufficiently mark the observance. In

observing these days, besides their use as a preparation for the solemn worship of Ascension-day, we should strive to fix our thoughts (in accordance with ancient usage,) upon GOD our FATHER, as the Deliverer from disease and death, and the Giver and Securer of the fruits of the earth. But while we are thus praying to Him that "He will give and preserve to us the kindly fruits of the earth, so that in due time we may enjoy them," let us never forget that temporal blessings are never to be desired except in connection with those spiritual ones, which CHRIST went up on high to receive as the chief gifts of GOD to men. Shall we pray for the fields that have been sown by the husbandmen, and forget those which are white to the harvest, and that call for spiritual labourers? Shall we "ask of the LORD—rain" to fertilize the soil, and forget to ask for the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon the fallow of men's hearts? Nay rather let these be our chief objects of petition—in using the liberty of prayer which CHRIST has given us as a parting bequest to the Church, from which His bodily presence is taken away.

Ascension Day.

THIS day concludes the glorious circuit through which the Sun of Righteousness has run His course. He who was with GOD from the beginning, was with Him in His divine nature, even while He walked on earth, or descended into Hades : but now His human nature is exalted to the right hand of the FATHER ; and we see our own nature in Him advanced to the glory which is the common destiny of the redeemed : for He is “ not ashamed to call us brethren,” and we are “ made to sit with Him in heavenly places” already. This inspiring truth is summed up in the Proper Preface, in which the Church, like the lark, seems to take the wings of the morning, and to sing at the very gate of heaven her exulting hope, “ that where He is, thither we shall also ascend and reign with Him in glory.”

We are taught then according to the Creed, that the *corporal* presence of CHRIST is in heaven ; and hence, that it is His *spiritual* presence which is with us in our meeting together in His Name ; which is with His ministers in the discharge of their functions ; and which is more especially vouchsafed to faith, in the LORD’S Supper.

Thus we see how vain is that shocking error of Rome, that the corporal flesh and blood, “ nerves and bones,” of CHRIST are daily *immolated* afresh,

and consumed by the teeth and digestive functions of even unbelieving hypocritical recipients ! CHRIST's blessed Body was unbroken, and stood before the disciples, when He said of the Bread, " this is My Body," and of the Cup, " this is My Blood." They did not eat and drink what stood before them and spake unto them and was not yet crucified ; but their faith fed on a spiritual substance which He gave them with the outward sign ; and which was His Flesh and His Blood, not in the letter " which profiteth nothing," but in " spirit" and " life."

At the Holy Communion to-day we are to reflect then that CHRIST's glorious presence is corporally in Heaven ; that " a bone of Him shall not be broken," and that it is only by faith that we can feed upon Him, and " discern the LORD's Body" in the Sacrament. We ask no further questions : we do not say " How can He give us His Flesh to eat : " but we believe just what He says, that the consecrated and broken Bread is bread, and yet His Body ; and that the Wine is wine, and yet His Blood. To deny that the outward sign is natural bread and wine, is just as really to destroy the Sacrament, as to deny that the inward and spiritual grace is " the Body and Blood of CHRIST." St. Paul clearly enforces this, (1 Cor. x. 16. 17,) when he says—" the cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of CHRIST ? " He surely does not mean that the

metal of the cup is changed into the blood : yet if anybody is so carnal as to insist on a literal change, he says it of *the cup*, and not of the wine. So he says—"the bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of CHRIST?" Here is the Church's doctrine in a word ; it is bread, and yet it is the body ; materially the one, and spiritually the other.

Two Thursdays therefore aid us in gaining the full idea of the Eucharist, Maunday Thursday, and "Holy Thursday" or Ascension Day. On the first the bread and wine were taken and received as CHRIST's Body and Blood, while the unchanged CHRIST stood before them. On the second the Body of our LORD became invisible to human eyes ; but it is required of faith to behold that Body at the right hand of the FATHER, and at the same time to "discern the LORD's Body" in the LORD's Supper. And this is just what our LORD prepared us for, (St. John vi. 62,) when He said—"Doth this offend you ? what and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before ?" It will be hard to believe the two facts, He intimates, unless you will understand that I am not speaking, as the silly and carnal Jews imagine, of my corporal substance, which I am going to take up to Heaven after the Resurrection, but of my spiritual substance, which I will give to the faithful, so that they shall "eat of this bread and live for ever." He says all this, when he adds—

“ It is the Spirit that quickeneth ; *the flesh profiteth nothing* : the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

It must be remembered, too, that CHRIST says of Himself “ I am the living Bread which came down from heaven ;” and again, “ I am the Bread of Life.” If we are to understand His words carnally therefore, we may as well affirm that His body was “ transubstantiated” into bread, as that bread is so turned into His Body. This awfully profane dogma of the Trent Council not only contradicts Scripture and the primitive Church, but bases itself on the *natural philosophy* of Aristotle, and thus incorporates an exploded system of material things with the faith of CHRIST ! To believe it, it is not enough to believe in CHRIST and His Apostles ; but we must also believe in the Pagan Philosopher, Aristotle. If his theory of *matter* is false, (as is now conceded,) then this dogma of transubstantiation is false, for it rests on his theory. It is sad to recur to false doctrines instead of simply presenting the truth ; but since this net has been spread for souls, it is necessary to “ beware lest any man spoil us through *philosophy* and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the *rudiments of the world*, and not after CHRIST.”*

* [There are points in this statement of doctrine which might, with advantage, be modified and explained, but I have not felt at liberty to meddle with what I in the main

The Epistle, to-day, is a portion from the Acts, giving the detailed account of the Ascension, and containing the great truth that the *forty* days which closed at the Ascension were days in which CHRIST gave to His Apostles their full instructions as to founding and perpetuating His kingdom in the earth. The book of the Acts is a record of these instructions as carried out by the Apostles, after the HOLY GHOST had come to bring all things to mind which CHRIST had told them. Thus as Moses received "the pattern in the mount" during the forty days in which the tabernacle was set up, the Church, of which that tabernacle was but a figure, was delivered to the Apostles as a "better" pattern in the mount. The Gospel is St. Mark's account of His "receiving up"—"after He had spoken to them;" and St. Luke's narrative is the Second Morning Lesson. In the Second Evening Lesson, St. Paul expounds the Apostolic Commission as an Ascension-gift, carrying out the idea of a triumphal pageant, where the conqueror in his chariot scattered gifts among the people, and led his captives in his train. The First Morning Lesson brings the forty days of the giving of the

agreed with, inasmuch as I felt, that every reader capable of entering into the difficulties of the question discussed, especially with reference to the Aristotelian views engrafted on the Scriptures, would have formed his own opinion already.—ED.]

Law into comparison with the forty days of the founding of the Church on that "stone which the builders rejected:" but the First Evening Lesson is a very important one, and reminds us of the fact that there were two typical ascensions before that of CHRIST. In the patriarchal times, "Enoch was translated;" in the Mosaic dispensation, Elijah "went up by a whirlwind into heaven." Thus before and after the flood men were darkly taught concerning their destination to something above this world; but in CHRIST they were shown the way as well as the meritorious cause of human exaltation, and were fully assured that the "heavens were opened to all believers." Observe that Elijah was carried up by heavenly agencies; but CHRIST sublimely rose by His own power, and rode upon the heavens by His name JAH, that is, JEHOVAH.

In the falling of Elijah's mantle was pre-signified the gift by CHRIST to His Apostles of His own prophetic commission, as well as of other spiritual powers. Elisha is a type of the Apostolic ministry, "healing the waters" and taking away dearth and barrenness from the world. The "little children" who mocked him were rather profane young men, who knew enough to scorn him as a prophet, and to wish him out of the world with Elijah. Their profaneness in bidding him "go up," that is, ascend to heaven, (so that they might live on, unrebuked in sin,) argues a deep depravity in them-

felves and in their parents. The curse of the prophet was not a personal but an inspired malediction, and pre-signifies the judgment of GOD on all those who scorn His ministers and hinder the work of the Gospel.

It only remains to say, that Proper Psalms are provided for this high festival, which are so appropriate that the day itself furnishes the comment. The old Introit is Psalm 47th; and a most appropriate Hymn which has been set to the music called "Cheshunt" in old collections, is a triumphant song of victory. How thrilling the apostrophe—

" Loose all your bars of massy light,
And wide unfold the radiant scene;
He claims these mansions as His right,
Receive the King of Glory in."

In Communion, the verses (in the Hymn) beginning—

" Thou, God, all glory, honour, pow'r
Art worthy to receive ;"

will be found a most fitting conclusion to the special solemnities of the celebration. If we have dwelt at great length on the services of this Feast, it is not only because it is too little honoured, but because there is nothing which can enter the mind of man so entirely beyond all that man imagines by his own powers, and so ennobling to his nature, as the truth which this day celebrates. Poor

finners that we are,—poor dying worms,—can it be that we are heirs of immortal glory, and that the way into the heaven of heavens stands wide open, so that we may follow the Son of God, and be welcomed by Him as brethren and partakers of His throne?

*Sunday after Ascension Day, or
Expectation Sunday.*

PERHAPS the darkest Sunday that was ever hallowed by the Church was that which followed our LORD's Ascension. The little band of the faithful were only an hundred and twenty, the eleven Apostles, with the Blessed Virgin and other holy women, included; and one narrow room in Jerusalem, probably that in which the Last Supper had been celebrated, contained the whole Catholic Church. CHRIST had said "I will not leave you *orphans*," and had promised to send the Comforter. But on this Sunday the LORD had gone up to glory, and the Comforter was not yet come. So then for the time they were *orphans*: but they looked for the timely fulfilment of the promise, and continued in prayer and supplication. They were expecting the Comforter, and hence this day is known in the Church as "Expectation Sunday," or the Sunday after the Ascension.

The Introit may be Psalm 93rd, and *Veni Creator*, in one of its versions, should be sung to-day, as also on Whitfunday.

The Collect throws us back in spirit to the earliest days of the Church, and makes us sympathize with that primitive band of disciples to whom JESUS had said, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your FATHER's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." We pray that we may not be "left comfortless," and we beseech Almighty GOD, by the power of the Spirit to "exalt us to the same place whither our SAVIOUR CHRIST is gone before." There is a touching harmony of sentiment in the Epistle and Gospel. "Be sober and watch unto prayer"—and "have fervent charity among yourselves"—may well be supposed to have been the primitive watchwords at this solemn and critical moment: and as every one felt in those days that something depended on himself individually, so now we are exhorted, according to the gifts we have received, to "minister one to another." The Gospel rehearseth the overwhelming words of CHRIST to the apostolic company, predicting their labours, sufferings, and deaths: at the same time, while it shows what great need they had of comfort, it renews the promise of comfort in the words—"when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the FATHER—even the Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the FATHER—He shall testify of Me." The procession of the Spirit from

the FATHER, here asserted, in no wise conflicts with His equal proceeding from the SON, which is elsewhere implied, if not expressly taught in Scripture.

For private meditation on this day, we may select the second Chapter of the Prophet Joel, accompanied by the seventeenth Chapter of the Gospel of St. John. The first named passage opens with the recognition of "a day of darkness and gloominess," but ends with that prediction of the outpouring of the Spirit of Consolation, to which St. Peter expressly refers in his sermon on Pentecost Day. St. John records for our use our SAVIOUR's Intercessory prayer, which is calculated forcibly to remind us of what our glorious Mediator and Advocate is doing for His faithful, there where He "ever liveth to make intercession for us." How much that ought to inspire our hopes and gratitude is implied in that expression of our SAVIOUR, in which He anticipates the conversion of unborn millions,—“neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word.” If we have thus believed the Apostolic Scriptures, and are admitted to the Apostolic Communion and fellowship, what text is there in all the Scriptures that should delight or console us more? At this time when we read it, its hallowed and touching words, carrying us back to Holy Week, and forward to Pentecost, have a most impressive effect, and come to the devout mind with cheering solemnity.

In the evening we may profitably study the promises contained in the third Chapter of Zephaniah, and the precept—"Wait ye upon me, saith the LORD;" comparing it with the words of St. Paul (2 Thes. iii. 5.) "the LORD direct your hearts, into the love of GOD, and into the *patient waiting* for CHRIST." The conclusion of that chapter, not less fitted to Expectation Sunday, teaches us that primitive charity and peace did not permit a compromise of Apostolic teaching. Even brethren, forgetting Apostolic ordinances, were to be admonished, and suspended from the fellowship of the faithful: that they might all with one accord strive together for the faith of the Gospel. If we expect GOD to manifest Himself to us, we must strive for Christian unity; and that not in the surrender of Apostolic truth, but in its steadfast maintenance and profession. In these days, if a Christian brother refuses to obey the precepts of the Apostles, it is common to say that—"it is of little consequence, provided he is sincere." But St. Paul speaks very differently; and his words are rehearsed this day to remind us that the HOLY GHOST comes as the Spirit of Truth; and that Truth must be the basis of the unity of the Spirit and the bond of Peace.

Whitsunday.

THE COMFORTER IS COME ! Think, first, of the joy and rapture with which the little Church, pent up in Jerusalem like lambs among wolves, took up this exulting strain, when after ten days of waiting the Eternal Spirit suddenly manifested His presence, and assured them that CHRIST, enthroned at the right hand of the FATHER, still loved His little flock, and had obtained the promised gift for their comfort and support. The coming of the HOLY GHOST in new form and with augmented power was the seal from the Most High, which certified all the whole Gospel to be from God. It proved the risen JESUS to be also the glorified JESUS ; (St. John vii. 39.) and so inspired the Church with a moral power and courage, which nothing else could have given. This is seen in the intrepid bearing of the once timid Peter ; and in the boldness of the whole Church, so lately assembling in secret “ for fear of the Jews.” But it is not only moral power, for the outpouring of the Spirit had filled them with *supernatural gifts* and with divine energy. And all this is summed up in the Preface to the Trisagion in this day’s EUCHARIST, —which so touchingly unites our own estate as Christians with the original coming of the Spirit, in the concluding words—“ whereby *we have*

been brought out of darknes and error into the clear light and true knowledge of Thee and of Thy Son JESUS CHRIST."

The Epistle is the historical narrative of St. Luke, and the Gospel a rehearsal of CHRIST's promises. The former winds up with sublime effect, and the latter is unusually full and significant as a selection bearing on the day. The promise of CHRIST is to be specially noted—"He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." These words establish the inspiration of the New Testament Scriptures, and supersede all idle inquiries as to when or how the Apostles and Evangelists "collected materials for their writings." Observe, also, the words concerning the Comforter, which show that He came not only for the moment, but to abide with the Church for ever,—"*even the Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive.*" Worldly men are seldom orthodox; they are carnal even in their religious views, and read Scripture with low views of its authority and of its origin. Observe also that of all our festivals Pentecost is the least relished by the world. They cannot enter into it: it requires a spiritual mind to receive refreshment and delight from its celebration.

In the old Introit (Psalm 33) observe the passage—"by the Word of the LORD were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the Breath of His mouth." The WORD is CHRIST, and the

BREATH is the **HOLY GHOST**. The Psalms appointed for the day are well selected, and calculated to give to our thoughts a right direction, bearing strictly upon the subject of our Commemoration. The whole of Psalm 68 is a sublime prophecy of the Ascension, and the coming of the Comforter; and we may note, in special reference to the immediate enlargement of the Apostolic ministry after Pentecost, the prediction of the Psalmist—"the LORD gave the word (*Gospel*): great was the company of the preachers." The Proper Psalms in the Evening Prayer display the work of the Spirit in the Creation and the Resurrection.

The First Lesson at Morning Prayer rehearses the institution of the Feast of *the fiftieth day*, or "Pentecost." It was also called the "feast of weeks" by the Hebrews, because a week of weeks, (seven times seven days,) intervened between the passover and this festival. It was reckoned from the day when the barley-sheaf was cut for the wave-offering of the Passover,—which signified CHRIST the "first-fruits" of the resurrection, or harvest of the world. The Seven weeks seem to have been appointed with reference to the *Seven-fold* Spirit; of which the Seven golden candlesticks were a symbol under the Law. The English name, Whitsunday, is said, by some, to be properly "Wit-Sunday"—*Wit* being the old English for Wisdom, and the Comforter being the "Spirit of Wisdom." It is more common to explain the term by refer-

ence to the white raiment which used to be worn on this day : but the whiteness of the Holy Dove, shedding the fiery tongues like feathers of gold, may also be suggested in connection with the words —“ ye shall be as the wings of a Dove that is covered with silver wings, and her feathers like gold.” And here it must be noted that the argument for the Christian Sabbath cannot be separated from the argument for Easter and Pentecost. If the LORD hallowed the First day of the week, so also He hallowed those Feasts, by making them the occasion of the Resurrection, and of the coming of the Comforter. It is the true view that the Passover and Pentecost were appointed under the Law to be perpetuated under the Gospel, when their nobler purpose should be revealed. Observe how GOD Himself keeps and honours His own appointments. The Passover is made the day of deliverance from Egypt, because it is to be the time of JESUS' deliverance, and of our deliverance by Him ; and Pentecost is made the day of giving the Law, because it is to be the day of giving the SPIRIT. Ten days therefore are numbered, after the Ascension, and it is not till the day of Pentecost is *fully come* that GOD sends the HOLY GHOST. Scripture shows (Acts xviii. 21 ; xx. 16 ; 1 Cor. xvi. 8,) that Pentecost was scrupulously observed as a Christian festival by St. Paul, who so earnestly opposes the keeping of mere Jewish feasts (Gal. iv. 9, 10, 11), and whose observance of this day was evidently in

accordance with the usage of the whole Church. The whole system of the "Christian Year" is thus demonstrated, by a comparison of this First Lesson with divine providences and Christian usages as exhibited in the New Testament.

The Second Lesson is well selected for reading in a congregation of those who as Gentiles were once afar off from GOD, in the times when "salvation was of the Jews," describing, as it does, the astonishment of St. Peter's Jewish companions, "because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost."* We may at the same time study another striking aspect of this gift of the Holy Ghost in the fourth Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, which contains a specimen of the boldness and wisdom with which two "unlearned and ignorant men" could preach the Gospel, when "filled with the Holy Ghost." Moreover, it celebrates the power of the Spirit, in giving boldness to all the faithful, and in making the early Christians "love one another." It contains also part of the primitive Liturgy, which they seem to have chanted "with one accord," as we do to this day. It consists of a Christian paraphrase of the second Psalm; and is further remarkable for the lyrical character of the prayer with which it concludes.

The Evening Lesson from Isaiah not only enu-

* Acts x. 45.

merates the Seven gifts of the Spirit, but prophetically names the countries into which the Pentecostal converts carried the Gospel—"the Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites," of whom we hear in the Epistle. The Second Lesson proves the ordinary gifts of the Spirit to have been bestowed by the Apostles in Confirmation, by "the laying on of hands," after the beginning of the Spirit's work in Baptism. The expression "we have not so much as heard whether there be any HOLY GHOST"—means only that they had not heard whether He was yet given. They were disciples of St. John Baptist, and they thus referred to the Baptist's promise—"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Of the fulfilment of this promise on the day of Pentecost they had not heard. John's baptism was not Christian baptism, but a mere preparation for it: the Apostles therefore proceeded to baptize these converts into the Church, and then to confirm them. Let us reflect on the power of the Spirit of God over evil spirits, as we hear the close of this Lesson, which rebukes "the curious arts" of necromancy and witchcraft—arts which we have lately seen revived;* and which are maintained in just such books as were zealously burned of old by those who had used them, as soon

* [The reference probably is to the pretended wonders of spirit-rapping and table-turning, of late so much talked of in America, as well as among ourselves.—ED.]

as they were freed from the power of the devil by the Holy Spirit of God.

As the whole Book of the Acts is a record of the work of the SPIRIT, and has been called "the Gospel of the Holy Ghost," we may continue to read it at this season as an accompaniment to the Daily Lessons. Indeed, the residue of the year might well be conceived of as a continuous commemoration of the Spirit, just as the earlier half of the year is dedicated to the Eternal Word; the feast of the Holy Trinity being the clasp, or bond, in which the whole is joined together. Thus "the LORD and Giver of Life" receives due honour, while His divine personality and blessed offices are prominently kept in view. May all who profess to worship the SPIRIT do so "in Spirit and in Truth."

Whit-Monday.

WHITSUN-WEEK, which falls in the season of flowers, and therefore—even if it be actually in June—in the poetic May of old England, may well be made a week of privilege to children in schools and families. But it should be a week of "joy in the HOLY GHOST," and therefore its spiritual exercises are multiplied and special. Monday and Tuesday are feasts, but Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday are Ember-fasts, and so there is but one day in the

seven, which is left to the ordinary circuit of the Church's worship. One might almost say that the Seven gifts of the Spirit have each their day of special propriety; and that thus the great feast of the Trinity is ushered in when the fulness of wisdom and understanding and counsel and might and knowledge and godliness and holy fear has fitted the Church to confess her faith in God, in asserting the mystery of His Tri-unity.

This is a fitting week for instructing the young and preparing them for their future Confirmation, so that by God's mercy it may prove to them *indeed* the anointing of the Spirit, and the giving of His Seven-fold grace. Where it is convenient also, it is a proper week for the reunion of confirmation classes under pastoral advice and regulation, to recal past vows and to inquire as to their results.*

The Epistle of to-day commemorates the first out-pouring of the Spirit upon a Gentile—the Centurion Cornelius. This was in degree a minor Pentecost, but its consequences have been immense: for it was the grafting of the wild stock of the Gentiles into the good olive-tree of Israel. The Gospel shows that this was the carrying out of the divine plan, which was not to save the Jews only but the world. Faith in the Son of God

* [A most valuable suggestion, helping to answer a question often asked anxiously among the Clergy; "How shall we keep our hold on the young of our flock?"—ED.]

henceforth makes the true son of faithful Abraham; and if a man is lost, it is not because of uncircumcision, but because "he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God."

The First Morning Lesson relates the confusion of tongues at Babel, which the gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost was meant to remedy. The Second Lesson is St. Paul's exposition of the gifts of the Spirit in their nature and purpose. Observe that they restore the unity and fellowship which was lost at Babel, and thus out of many nations and tongues is made one Catholic Church.

In the Evening, we read of the seventy elders who received the SPIRIT of prophecy under the Law; and, in the Second Lesson, of the order and method to which the highest spiritual gifts were subjected in the public worship of the Apostolic Church.

Whitsun-Tuesday.



THE Epistle is the narrative of the first recorded Confirmation; when the converts whom Philip the deacon had baptized were visited and blessed by the Apostles with the laying on of hands. Thus, they received the HOLY GHOST in the fulness of His gifts, having only been so far partakers of the SPIRIT as babes in CHRIST—"not spiritual, but carnal"—that is, only initiated into spiritual life.

The Gospel, while it connects itself with Pentecost, is designed to remind us that the HOLY GHOST was sent by the Good Shepherd to the "sheep of His pasture," that they might evermore feed in green pastures, and be led by waters of comfort. It is also a Preface to the Ember-fasts and to the Ordaining Sunday about to follow.

The First Lesson shows the power of the Spirit to qualify whom He will as prophets of the LORD, and sometimes to make evil men vessels of mercy to others—as it is written—"Is Saul also among the prophets?" In the Second Lesson we should note the precept—"Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings." We do the one when we resist the motions of divine grace in our consciences: we do the other, when we disregard Inspired Scripture, or the teachings of its worthy and lawful expounders in the legitimate exercise of their ministry.

At Evening Prayer, the First Lesson appears to have been appointed as contrasting the giving of the Law on tables of stone with the writing of the Gospel on the fleshly tablets of the heart. One sublime passage—which should be compared with St. Paul's exposition (Rom. x. 6, 7, 8.) in the Epistle to the Romans—is specially suited to the time: "It is not in heaven that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?" In other words, though CHRIST is ascended, His pro-

mife is fulfilled ; the Spirit has come down, and His truth is with us.

[The Second Lesson warns us in emphatic language not to rest in idle acquiescence, “believing every spirit,” but in the power of the Holy Scriptures and in devout dependance upon the Inspirer of them, to “try the spirits whether they be of GOD.” “Every spirit which confesseth that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh is of GOD.” Nor does it less teach us to try ourselves, whether we have received the HOLY GHOST, for “hereby,” alone, “know we that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.”]

Ember-Days in Whitsuntide.



HOUGH Trinity Sunday is an Ordaining Sunday, it is so not as the Feast of the Trinity but as the Octave of Pentecost. For the HOLY GHOST came to ensure a perpetual succession of Apostles and pastors and teachers in the Christian Church, and so to make good the promise of CHRIST to be with His Apostles to the end of the world. It is the Spirit only that can ordain, albeit by means of human hands ; as when Moses ordained Joshua (Deut. xxxiv. 9), he “was full of the SPIRIT of Wisdom.” The Apostles themselves were not

completely empowered till they had received the HOLY GHOST on the day of Pentecost, to fill up the initial gift (St. John xx. 22, compared with Acts i. 8.) which CHRIST Himself had imparted at Easter. Then "the LORD gave the word; great was the company of the preachers."

The fitness of the Pentecostal Season then, as one of preparation for the commissioning of fresh messengers of the Gospel, must be obvious. Let these days be kept in earnest prayer for all Bishops, pastors and missionaries, that those to be ordained may indeed be men "full of the HOLY GHOST, and of wisdom." Let us pray that by their ministry the HOLY SPIRIT may be communicated in power and comfort to nations that still sit in darkness and the shadow of death. So shall there be "tongues of fire" once more in answer to ardent prayer, and other tribes shall sing with exultation, "we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."

Trinity Sunday.



THE Church's Services have culminated; to-day they mount up to the throne of the Godhead; for knowing the Son and the HOLY GHOST, we know the FATHER also, and that these three are not three Gods, but one God.

The Church, to-day, celebrates the glory and majesty of GOD in His essence and in His works. In the word Trinity she simply sums up what is revealed concerning Him ; that in substance He is one, but in persons three. In this there is nothing contradictory : for the subject-matter is far beyond the grasp of us finite creatures of an hour. But it is something mysterious, for we know not how His unity of substance consists with the Trinity of persons. Nor do we know anything of GOD which He has not told us : nor is there anything told us of GOD which is not mysterious. The FATHER could not make us acquainted with the SON and the SPIRIT, without giving us knowledge of mysterious facts as to His Nature. Now the Gospel consists in our knowledge of the SON and the SPIRIT in their divinity and offices ; and thus the Trinity is the fundamental verity of the Gospel. It is taught us, not as an enigma, an arbitrary communication to faith : but practically, as the basis of all that we must know and do as Christians.

The Collect enables us to worship the *Unity* which exists in the power of the Divine Majesty, even while we acknowledge the glory of the Eternal Trinity. The Epistle exhibits this "Unity of the Divine Majesty," as beheld by St. John in his visions : ONE sat on the throne—whom the four living creatures worship in the Trine ascription of Holiness—as we do in the words—

“ Holy FATHER, Holy SON,
Holy SPIRIT, Three in one.”

In the Gospel, observe the text—“ I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of GOD.” Here CHRIST is the speaker, the SPIRIT is spoken of as the Regenerator, and the FATHER is referred to—“ whose is the Kingdom ;” while all is spoken with reference to baptism “ in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.” If GOD is One, these three persons must be one in substance ; or into what are we baptized ? This same Gospel also rebukes the Spirit which asks, “ how can these things be,” with reference to revealed truth : and as if providing for this full revelation of Himself, CHRIST says to the Pharisees—“ If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things ?” Observe, too, He that thus spake declared Himself to have “ come down from heaven,” and yet asserted Himself to be in heaven, while He was thus speaking. “ The Son of Man, who is in heaven,” is the name He gives Himself while talking to Nicodemus. Surely then, this is “ the man that is *my fellow*, saith the LORD of Hosts ”—that is, the man that is equal with GOD.

This Epistle and this Gospel are the more striking, because they are the ancient ones for the Octave of Pentecost ; and were not specially selected

with reference to the Trinity. But Scripture is full of the Trinity, even where it is not seen at first; as a ray of white light is found to consist of three primary colours. Even so—"God is Light."

[There are no Proper Psalms appointed for Trinity Sunday, but indeed all the Psalms are, to the instructed Christian, so full of God, His Word, and His Breath or Spirit, that a selection need scarcely be made.]

The Church reads to-day the first Chapter of Genesis. And lo! the same principle meets us here, in the first chapter of the Bible, which is the First Lesson. "In the beginning God created:"—even here we have a noun plural and verb singular in the Hebrew—plurality and unity in the name of God in the very first verse of the Bible. So "the Spirit" moves on the face of the waters! Again, "God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness;" and so, "God created Man in His own image"—plurality and unity once more.

After this Lesson, detailing the works of Creation, it is common to read or sing, instead of *Te Deum*, the *Benedicite*—"Oh all ye works of the LORD"—concluding with the *Gloria Patri*, which adapts it to the day, and is rubrical. The Second Lesson is the narrative of our LORD's Baptism, which was a manifestation of the Trinity. The FATHER spake, the SON was indicated as His well-

beloved, and the HOLY GHOST descended upon Him in visible shape.

[The Athanasian Creed follows, which is the testimony of the Church as to the "Faith once delivered to the Saints:"] and when we say afterwards in the Nicene Creed the words, "being of one substance with the FATHER," we must remember that this is the grand verity which we confess this day.

In the Holy Communion we profess the substance of the Athanasian Confession,* in the words—addressed to the FATHER—"who are one with Thee in Thy Eternal Godhead," or in the fuller words, omitting the address to the FATHER—"Who art one GOD, one LORD, not one only person, but three persons in one substance: for that which we believe of the glory of the FATHER, the same we believe of the SON, without any difference, or inequality."

The Trinity Hymns at our disposal are very fine—and among them that one produced by the piety and orthodoxy of a Bishop of our own Anglo-Indian Church—

"Holy, Holy, Holy, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY,
Early in the morning shall our song rise to Thee:
Holy, Holy, Holy, merciful and mighty!
GOD in three Persons, blessed Trinity!"

The Second Evening Lesson is St. John's emphatic assertion of the Trinity, which he also ex-

[* The Athanasian Creed does not appear to be in use in the American Church.]

pounds and interweaves with all truth in the same chapter. It is not a solitary text here and there, but the whole of Scripture, which teaches the Triune God, for we read it in the first chapter in the morning, and now we find it in one of the last. How truly we say then, "as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end." AMEN.

*Minor Festivals.**

ST. THOMAS' DAY.



HIS Festival might seem appropriate to Easter-tide rather than to Advent; but it must be recollected, that there is an important connection between the Nativity of CHRIST and His Resurrection, which is brought into view by the position of this Feast. For this truth, see Romans i. 3, 4. With this remark, a recurrence to the Services of Holy Week will sufficiently illustrate those of this day.

This day is the shortest day in the year, as St. John Baptist's Day is the longest, in our northern hemisphere. After the Baptist's day till now the days are gradually shortened: after Christmas they begin to lengthen. In this coincidence old-fashioned people used to recollect that saying of the Baptist—"He must increase, but I must decrease."

* Some of the leading Minor Festivals, i. e. Commemorations not directly referring to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, will here be noticed in their order.

ST. STEPHEN'S DAY.

THE Church has ordered that nearest to CHRIST in her commendations should stand those who are most like unto Him, in "counting not their own lives dear unto them" for His sake, and for the sake of the souls for which He died. And so we have immediately after Christmas the three representatives of corresponding classes of witnesses for CHRIST; St. Stephen the martyr in will and deed; St. John the martyr in will but not in deed; and the Little Innocents martyrs in deed though not in will. And it has been well observed, that thus the great fun of Christmas seems to linger in its light after its going down; the red glare of the first martyrdom being succeeded by the softer radiance of St. John's long confessorship, and that in turn by the fainter glory of the suffering babes of Bethlehem.

In the Lesson from the Proverbs observe the text "the righteous are bold as a lion." In the Second Lesson we see an illustration of this truth in the speech of St. Stephen, which is an elaborate review of the history of the Jewish Church; showing that they never had recognized or received the messengers of GOD—not even Moses himself,—in the day of their visitation; and that in rejecting CHRIST they had been true to themselves in fulfilling the LORD's parable of the vineyard. Their fathers had slain the servants, but they had slain

the heir whom the FATHER had sent saying, "they will reverence my Son." This great Sermon of St. Stephen which was the immediate cause of his martyrdom, is concluded in the Second Lesson for Evening Prayer ; and the First Lesson, appropriate enough to the first of the noble army of Christian Martyrs, bewails the oppressions done under the sun, because "on the side of their oppressors there was power."

As an Introit, the 83rd Psalm would seem to be appropriate, as celebrating the deliverance of the Church from her enemies, which has been accomplished in all ages by making the blood of the martyrs the seed of her increase. Thus "the Synagogues of the Libertines, the Cyrenians and Alexandrians," may well be likened to "the tabernacles of the Edomites and the Ishmaelites, the Moabites and Hagarenes." But the solemn and prophetic imprecations of the Law against the enemies of GOD must be viewed as one side of an all-wise system ; while it is the part of the Gospel to illustrate rather its other side, that of mercy to the chief of sinners. Our SAVIOUR prayed for His murderers, and St. Stephen was the first to follow His blessed example. For such as repent there is mercy, as is proved by the case of Saul of Tarsus ; while for such as live and die in their iniquity, there is a fearful retribution, which often begins even in this world. The fearful end of persecutors is the subject of an early

Christian treatise by the elegant and classical Lactantius.

Concerning the Epistle, it is sufficient to say that it is the history of St. Stephen's martyrdom; short and simple, but sublime. Observe, his dying was but "falling asleep." The early Christian sepulchres were called *cemeteries* or *sleeping places* with reference to such instances of inspired warrant for the idea. The Gospel is our LORD's prediction of the persecution of His messengers; and is a terrible denunciation of judgment against the city which killed the prophets. On this generation their fathers' sins were visited, because they filled up the measure of their fathers' sins: and this, be it remarked, is the law of GOD's temporal judgments. Had they repented, CHRIST Himself assures us that He "would have gathered them, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings." Their blood was left on their own heads when JESUS added the words—"but ye would not."

ST. JOHN'S DAY.

THIS is the day of the Daniel of the New Covenant—the beloved disciple—the Son of Thunder—the Evangelist, the Divine, the Apostle; the writer of three inspired Epistles; the exile of Patmos; the centenarian patriarch of the Church; of him who outlived all the other Apostles, who lived into the second century of the Christian Church, who

did for the Greek Churches what St. Paul did for the Latin ; who saw the Apocalypse, and who, to all his other claims to our veneration, adds yet this, that he was the guardian and the adopted Son of the Blessed Virgin ; was chosen to this office by our LORD Himself, and named thereto by His dying words upon the Cross.

In him was realized the promise—"if ye drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt you;" and he escaped the burning cauldron of the tyrant Domitian, unharmed by the fire. He was a martyr of a peculiar kind.

The Lessons from Ecclesiastes are not strikingly appropriate, but the Second Lessons are well chosen. They are the first and last chapters of the great work which St. John wrote as the prophet of the New Testament Canon. The Morning Lesson contains the narrative of his exile to Patmos, and the sublime account of his rapture on "the LORD's Day," which is thought by some critics to be the annual rather than the weekly festival of CHRIST's resurrection or Easter day. In either case it is an important proof of the Christian Sabbath and of the festival system. The Evening Lesson is a refreshing foretaste of heaven, and contains the text appropriate to the Season of Christmas,—“I am the root and the offspring of David, the Bright and the Morning-Star.”

The 92nd Psalm, as the Introit, celebrates the triumph of the Apostle over his persecutors, and

the fact that he lived to "bring forth more fruit in his age."

The Apostle says, that he has no greater joy than to hear that his children "walk in the truth." In the Collect we pray accordingly that this joy may be fulfilled in us. It is an eminently beautiful prayer. The Epistle is St. John's Christmas offering to his Master—a tribute to his Divinity, Incarnation, and Atonement. The Gospel teaches us that there are many ways of glorifying GOD, in life and death; and that we must not curiously inquire as to our destinies, but simply follow providence in fidelity to obvious duty. GOD will order all to our good and His own glory.

INNOCENTS' Day.

THIS day was called *Childermas* in old times, and is still the Church's Feast of Children. It is designed to remind us of the relations of little children to the kingdom of heaven; that CHRIST has accepted them as unconscious martyrs; and that, as experience in such as the aged St. John, and strength in such as the youthful St. Stephen, so a state of baptismal innocence, by remission of sin, is the glory of little children. (1 John ii. 12, 13.) The first Morning Lesson, from Jeremiah (ch. xxxi.) is the grand key to the day's solemnity, as a direct prophecy of the Massacre of the Innocents by Herod; and also as a prediction of Infant Salvation: "a

voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, &c." "Thus saith the LORD, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD, and *they shall come again from the land of the enemy.*"*

The Epistle takes up this promise, and shows the lovely army of infant martyrs, as little lambs on Mount Sion, in the fold of Him who is at once the Lamb of GOD and the Shepherd of the sheep. Observe, with reference to the Baptism of Infants, the simple characteristic of their salvation—"having His FATHER's name written in their foreheads." In the death of Christian infants this is the consoling thought: they have not known Him, but He has known them and written His name upon them. They are redeemed and their original sin is washed out, and they have committed no actual transgression: "in their mouth is found no guile, and they are without fault before the throne of GOD."

The Gospel narrates the fulfilment of the prophecy concerning Rachel: and the Collect is a pious aspiration after that spirit of little children, without which no soul can be accepted according to the declaration of CHRIST Himself. It is important to the understanding of the nature of Redemption, that we should get the great idea, that

* Jeremiah xxxi. 15, 16.

"of such is the kingdom of Heaven." The ignorant question whether infants may be baptized is thus reversed: and we find that actual transgressors can only be entitled to baptism by "becoming as little children." In a word—CHRIST'S Atonement would include all that are born of women, and would restore all mankind, were it not for actual sin. Children who do not sin in act are therefore healed by free grace; but others who have sinned against light and knowledge must of necessity repent of their sins, before the same free grace can reach their souls.

CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL.

OF other Saints we celebrate the Martyrdom; but in the case of him who was *in deaths oft*, and who "*died daily*" we commemorate the event in which he first learned what great things he was to suffer for CHRIST'S sake. This day is another Epiphany, well worthy to stand next that Feast in the Calendar—for it is the commemoration of CHRIST'S manifestation to the Great Doctor of the Gentiles, in order that by him He might be manifested to all the world. The Light that appeared to the wise men was made effectual when the same Light shone round Saul of Tarsus as he journeyed to Damascus. That Light was the Shekinah or incommunicable glory of GOD. JESUS appeared invested therein, to prove to His persecutor that

He was the Messiah, and that He was risen from the dead. Not for His sake, but for ours ! The door to the Gentiles was about to be opened by the baptism of Cornelius, and a chosen vessel to bear the grace of God was needed. It pleased the LORD of Glory to furnish an Apostle who should be himself a monument of His Resurrection and Godhead. All the evidence that an honest heart could desire, in an unexpected moment flashed upon him. This miracle was wrought to enlighten the whole world, but Saul's "obedience to the heavenly vision" was that of any convinced and humbled sinner. He might have disobeyed—but he repented and willingly received Baptism after prayer and fasting. The Gospel therefore was miraculously preached to him, and through him to all the world ; but to say that his conversion was miraculous, is in strict language improper, and favours the wildest enthusiasm. We celebrate on this day, not so much the Conversion of St. Paul, as the Illumination of the World by means of a miraculous Epiphany of CHRIST Himself ; and while we enjoy the reflected light of this Epiphany in the Epistles written and the Churches planted by St. Paul, we must not forget that much more was done for our souls than for his in that dispensation of Providence to which we owe our knowledge of the Gospel.

But even if we regard this great event with the leaden eye of the cold and faithless rationalist—

what abundant reason there is to remember it! The Conversion of St. Paul has left enduring consequences. In our own times a worldly great man has been known to revolutionize all Europe, and by means of armies and navies and swift beasts, to fly throughout the world, working the mightiest of changes. But all has died with him, and vanished "like a thin froth that is driven away with the storm." St. Paul, on the contrary, journeying as far and wide as he, (although on foot "in peril of robbers," or in crazy vessels "in perils of the sea,") with the simple sword of the Spirit, meets and conquers alike the boisterous mob of Ephesus—the rustics of inner Asia—the sages of Athens—the officers of Cæsar's household—if not also the savages of Britain. It is eighteen hundred years since—and all that he did remains. In three hundred years from the time when he bowed his head to Nero's sword—the work he left had survived the superstition of the Cæsars; and the odious Cross in which he gloried had supplanted the Roman Eagle. We have reason then to celebrate the event on which the world's destinies have hinged; especially as God has committed it to our devout admiration in no less than three several narratives.

The old Introit is the Psalm *Confitebor tibi*, or the 138th. It appears to have been chosen, like the Evening Lesson from Wisdom, with reference to St. Paul's mission to the princes of the earth,

who are called "gods" by the Psalmist. Yet in reference to his fasting and penitence, and his strengthening in the HOLY GHOST, there is a propriety in applying to the Conversion of St. Paul the verse,—“When I called upon Thee, Thou heardest me, and enduedst my soul with much strength.”

The Collect expresses the object of the Commemoration ; gratitude to GOD for the Conversion of St. Paul, as the gracious means of bringing us to the knowledge of the Truth. The Epistle repeats the history of the event ; and the Holy Gospel is chosen in reference to one who sacrificed houses and lands, and wife and children, for CHRIST's sake and the Gospel's. Yet its chief point seems to be in the words of CHRIST Himself,—“But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.” Of the earliest Apostles, one betrayed the LORD, and another who in many things was first, for a time fell away ; but St. Paul—though “born out of due season,” and last called—laboured “more abundantly than they all,” and was not a whit behind the “chiefest of the Apostles.”

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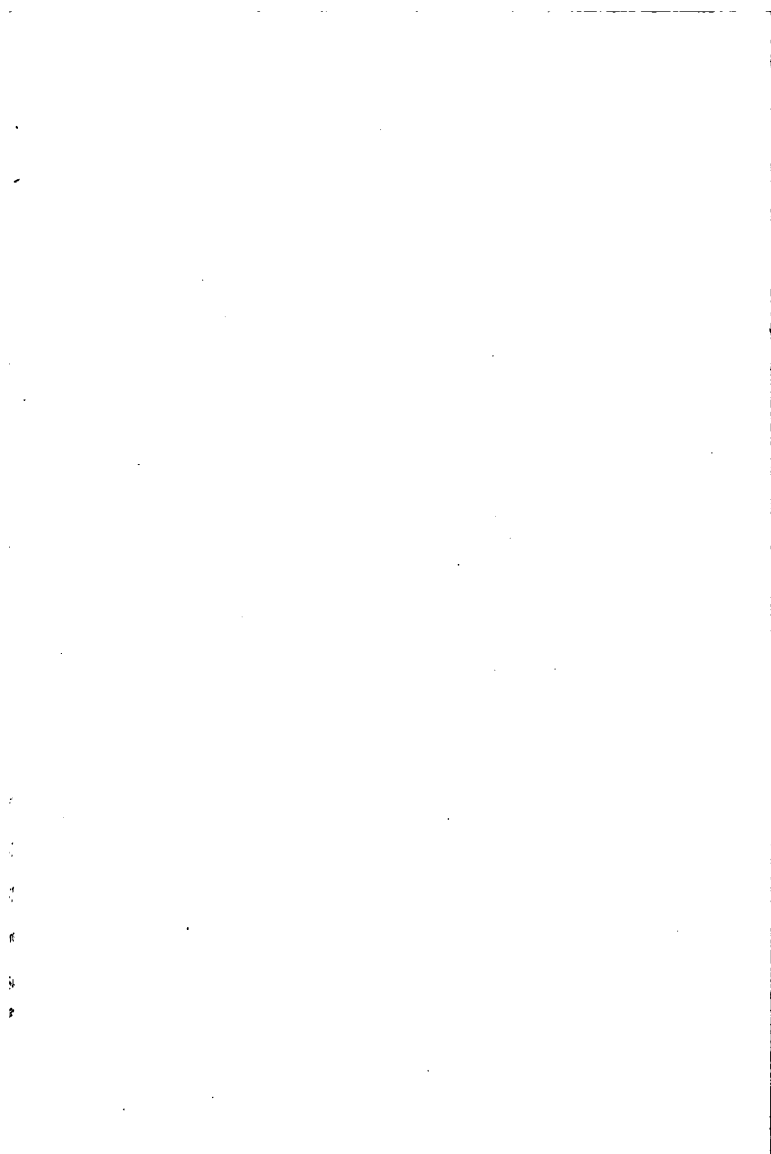


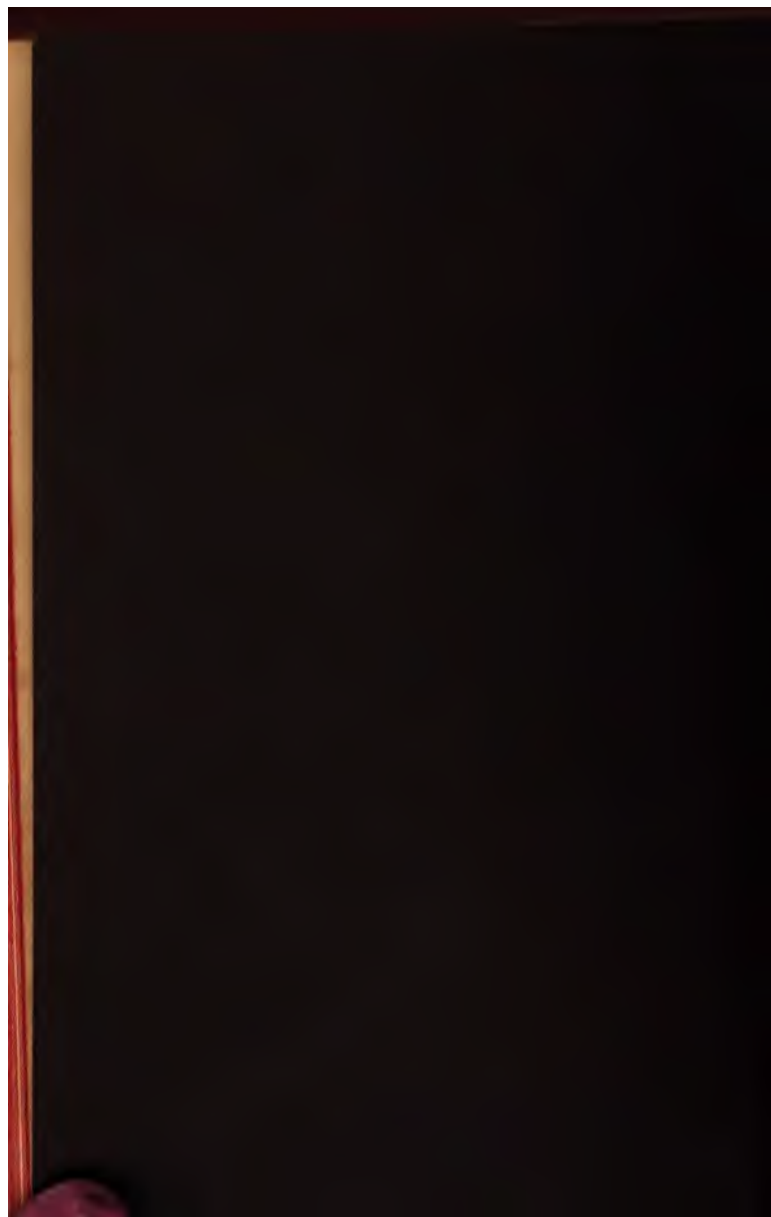
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